

The Sci-Fi Channel showcases *Phantom* week, *Soultaker*, *Cult Classics* and *New Eden*!

BY MAX LANSING

IN MARCH, SCI-FI PRESENTS THE NEWEST INSTALLMENT of *Masters of Fantasy*, the network's occasional look at science fiction authors and behind-the-scenes sci-fi personalities. The latest edition of this thirty-minute original presentation, featuring a special surprise guest, airs Friday, March 3 at 7:30 P.M. eastern standard time* and 11:30 P.M.;

Saturday, March 4 at 6 P.M.; Sunday, March 5 at 8:30 P.M. and 12:30 A.M.; and Monday, March 6 at 1 P.M., 7:30 P.M. and 11:30 P.M.

Then take advantage of a rare opportunity to view the last episodes of *Inaders*, *Time Tunnel*, *The New Dark Shadows* and *Alien* on *Last Episode* (Cliffhanger Playhouse (tentative title)). This four-and-a-half hour special event fea-

now-you-don't when the Sci-Fi Channel presents a week of movies showcasing those ghouls of illusion and delusion on *Phantom Week* (tentative title). Featured titles include *Phantom Planet*, *Phantom From Space*, *Phantom Ship*, and the 1925 and 1962 versions of *Phantom of the Opera*. All films will be shown nightly at 9 P.M. and 1 A.M.

Next, the Sci-Fi Channel pays tribute to an innovative director and producer who changed the face of science fiction on the *Cult Classics of Roger Corman*. This retrospective presentation will look at the very unique individual who helped launch the careers of personalities such as Jack Nicholson, Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola. It airs Saturday, March 25 at 1 P.M. and Sunday, March 26 at 2 P.M., 9 P.M. and 1 A.M.

In April, the Sci-Fi Channel presents *New Eden*, a Planetary Premiere Movie, starring Stephen Baldwin and Lisa Bonet. *New Eden* is the futuristic tale of a mild-mannered engineer who is exiled to a harsh prison planet. He helps the prisoners grow food and then leads them in defending their farms from vicious marauders. This original, never-before-seen film, available exclusively on Sci-Fi, airs Saturday, April 22 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M.; Sunday, April 23 at 4:30 P.M. and Saturday, April 29 at 4 P.M.

This spring is a perfect time to head westward—to Creation Entertainment's Grand Slam Show III, billed as the greatest *Star Trek* convention ever. This three-day extravaganza will include appearances by major stars, a lavish dealer emporium, incredible displays, and happening parties. Plus, the Sci-Fi Channel will be there, with a booth featuring programming information, channel goodies, and more. It all takes place on March 17-19 from 11-7 P.M. daily at the Pasadena Center at 300 E. Green Street in Pasadena, California. Please call (818) 409-0960 for more information.

And now, here's your chance to help science fiction put its stamp on envelopes all over America. The Sci-Fi Channel is backing a movement to put the faces of three classic horror legends on U.S. postage stamps. Sarah Karloff (daughter of Boris) has joined forces with Ron Chaney (grandson of Lon) and Bela Lugosi, Jr. (son of Bela) to develop a campaign to petition the U.S. Postmaster General for a special stamp set commemorating these horror stars. This "Legends of Horror" series would include three stamps, each one featuring the actor's likeness in the foreground, and in the back-

Continued on page 64



Stephen Baldwin and Lisa Bonet star in *New Eden*, a Planetary Premiere Movie. Exiled to a harsh prison planet, Baldwin defends the prisoners' farms from vicious marauders.

turing the final installments of these classic television series airs Saturday, March 4 at 7 P.M. and 11:30 P.M. and Sunday, March 5 at 2 P.M.

Keep your soul covered when you curl up to watch *Soultaker*, a Sci-Fi Channel Premiere Feature and recent winner of the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Film's Golden Scroll Award. In *Soultaker*, a violent car crash plays havoc with the forces of nature, separating a young couple's souls from their bodies. Held captive in an unseen world, they fight for their lives against a powerful and mysterious Soultaker while struggling to reunite their inner beings. A battle ensues, leaving the Soultaker's prey potentially trapped forever. *Soultaker* can be seen Saturday, March 11 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M. and Sunday, March 12 at 4:30 P.M.

From March 20 through 24, it's now-you-see-them,

* All times are shown in eastern standard time. Please adjust for your local time zone.



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Science fiction computer games need to catch up.

By JEFFREY FRENTZEN

IN THE MARRIAGE OF COMPUTER-BASED games and science fiction stories, science fiction usually takes a beating. But there's hope as computer games evolve from mindless *Star Wars* and *Alien* rip-offs into "interactive movies" in which the players determine how the story proceeds and choose their own ending. Game designers and producers should consider hiring professional writers to develop game scenarios or use existing science

fiction stories. Developers could then concentrate on creating exciting graphical environments rather than plots. Something has to change, because currently most game producers are heading for a creative dead end. In the gaming medium, speculative fiction's often high-flying

computer games. Where are the games based on the stories of Robert Silverberg or J.G. Ballard? Those who create video games are technicians first and, if they're sufficiently talented, storytellers second.

As such, game designers must first consider a player's eye-hand coordination and other software-interface issues before the game scenario is implemented. As for content, the commercial vendors see big dollar signs when their "killer game" is an apocalyptic science fiction story with mucho gore, fast-moving action, and three-dimensional screen displays.

Until recently, the paramount issue in computer-game design had nothing to do with storytelling. The constraints of computer memory, hard-disk space, and other subsystems kept games more or less simple. For example, only so much motion-video data could remain in a computer's video subsystem at one time, which rendered "flat" animations that inspired chuckles, not wonder.

In the last year, however, faster graphics and other computer subsystems have become affordable, and acceptable full-motion video and high-quality stereo sound are becoming routine features in consumer-brand PCs.

As a storage medium, CD-ROM has allowed game designers to create—and gamers to play—elaborately tooled interactive games; some of the products span three or four CD-ROM discs. CD-ROM can hold huge graphics and sound files, including realistic, thirty-frame-per-second animation sequences. Some game designers have taken advantage of this new-found freedom to experiment.

One of the better experiments has materialized in the educational software arena, rather than from the ranks of action arcade games. Creative Labs' CD-ROM version of Stephen W. Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* melds interesting—almost avant garde—video graphics and digitized special effects with Hawking's unstoppable genius. The CD-ROM is a game in the sense that it will not advance without user involvement, but it's clearly a documentary at heart, with Hawking narrating most of his fascinating science lesson.

For over a year, another educational CD-ROM vendor, Knowledge Adventure, has been pushing out one "docuCD" after another. The subject matter doesn't stray very far from the natural sciences, but the treatment is usually clever and inventive. Last year's *Bug Adventure* and 3-D *Dinosaur Adventure* came with gimmicky paper



ABOVE: Step into *Dune's* Ornithopter (a helicopter that looks like an insect) and fly it across the deserts of the planet Arrakis.

BELOW: In the pilot's cockpit you can select any destination (note cursor on right).

ideas take a back seat to concepts like, "See the creature in the corner of the spaceship, now kill it."

In the early days of CD-ROM, an obscure company called World Library initiated a misguided attempt to move computer-based science fiction beyond the "outer space-Western" mode. Their "Library of the Future" series of CD-ROMs included an installment of well-known science fiction stories. The on-screen presentation, though, was merely a direct port of printed text with no illustrations. Literature purists might consider that to be a satisfactory digital rendition of their favorite prose, but the rest of us want imagery, stereo sound, and fun.

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glasses for viewing their so-so 3-D sequences. (*Bug Adventure* did, however, have an amazing 3-D close-up of an airborne honeybee.)

On the science-fact front, *Knowledge Adventure's Space Adventure 2* is less gimmicky but concentrates on an entertaining lesson-based discourse about the solar system, constellations, and other astronomy subjects. The video animations are not especially good, although the overall package shapes up as a good learning tool for children and adults.

Regarding computer-based animation, for years I've been subjected to products that promise top-flight video but deliver so-so results. Until now.

On the surface, Virgin Games' CD-ROM upgrade to their game based on Frank Herbert's *Dune* seemed redundant. *Dune II*, released in 1992, garnered awards for design and was a fine science fiction strategy game. The CD-ROM version capitalizes on the characters featured in David Lynch's idiosyncratic *Dune* movie, retains some of the strategy concepts familiar to players of *Dune II*, but is a significantly different game. The big whoop about CD-ROM *Dune* is the extraordinary care taken in creating synchronized sound and graphics, and some very good animation sequences. On a PC-compatible computer loaded with fast graphics and a triple-speed CD-ROM player, the game has some surprisingly stunning moments. For example, whenever you take an Ornithopter (a helicopter that looks like a big insect) across the vast desert of planet Arrakis, the 3-D textures are evocative enough to make you forget you're watching a bunch of moving screen pixels. For years, I've braced myself whenever digitized characters open their mouths because the soundtracks don't match and remind me of Japanese monster movies and their badly dubbed English soundtracks. In the CD-ROM *Dune*, though, the sounds match the mouth movements. Thank you, programmers. I knew it was possible.

Another recent example of technical achievement, *The Star Trek Interactive Technical Manual* CD-ROM, puts an unexpectedly entertaining spin on those dry U.S.S. *Enterprise* mechanical-drawing tomes. The CD-ROM starts with a lengthy tour of an unpopulated *Enterprise*, narrated by actor Jonathan "First Officer William T. Riker" Frakes. Soon, players can negotiate several levels of the starship and learn its secrets. *The Star Trek Interactive Technical Manual* is a rare example of a CD-ROM product that is better than the book, and offers a good blueprint for future interactive books. Its very user-friendly, mouse-driven interface leads you into various areas of the ship, some of which you would never be able to view on the TV series. Players can click on hypertext documents to learn more about a particular detail, or listen to the *Enterprise* computer explain things in a well-synchronized, clear voice. Look closely at a tricorder and "play" with it; "pick

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up" and examine many 3-D objects from a variety of angles; and watch fairly impressive video clips that demonstrate the *Enterprise's* various weapon systems.

As good as it is, the "manual" points to the two big problems with state-of-the-art CD-ROM games. First, your computer needs a very fast processor to transfer the high-quality video images into smooth animations. With anything less than a 486-based PC, the images will jerk and pan roughly; a triple-speed or better CD-ROM drive is also essential, for the same reason.

The other point is more serious and afflicts many computer-based games. Despite the attention lavished on graphic design and technical issues, designers and game producers seem to spend less time developing compelling content. Every robot-out-of-control game scenario was old news when E. and O. Binder wrote the "Adam Link" stories over fifty years ago. For example, a close inspection of the *The Star Trek Interactive Technical Manual* reveals more "spacey" fiction than science fiction, in its extrapolation of hogwash to define the minutiae of the starship's internals. I had no idea how laughable it really was until I sat down with a printed version of the *Technical Manual* and an amused real-life engineer.

Even though the electronic-gaming horizons have widened, most computer games still want you to look in that spaceship and find the creature. Last year's murder-mystery adventure game, *Under a Killing Moon*, was really an interactive movie, with Hollywood actors, scripted lines, impressive production values, and spanned four CD-ROM discs. Unfortunately, the script was terrible and most of the acting (despite the involvement of Margot Kidder and James Earl Jones) was misdirected. The video graphics engine and other technical points were top-flight, though.

Last year's *Critical Path* was another attempt to blend traditional computer-game action and live actors, with well-designed video sequences displayed in a small video window on the player's monitor. But *Critical Path*, *Under a Killing Moon*, and other multimedia titles are attracting the same criticism.

Mecheadeus, the company that created *Critical Path*, has been preparing another multimedia title—*The Daedalus Encounter*—which looks to be the most ambitious live-action interactive game yet. It stars Tia Carrere and Christian Bouchert as astronauts who run a salvage company in deep space, and you play a disembodied entity who must help them avoid a collision with a star. Scheduled for Christmas 1994 release, *The Daedalus Encounter* was delayed, reportedly because the producers realized the basic plotline was not sophisticated enough to hold a gamer's attention. It is in a post-production limbo while the game engine is "enhanced."

A slew of CD-ROM-based computer games scheduled for 1995 release likewise

Continued on page 73

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Outbreak; the Spielberg Network; and Godzilla Lives...maybe.

BY ED FLIXMAN

OUTBREAK, A MAINSTREAM DOOMSDAY thriller based upon grim facts and all-too-possible events in the style of *The China Syndrome*, is due out this March, though at press-time, Warner Brothers' release plans remain tentative. The film stars Dustin Hoffman and Rene Russo as a pair of formerly married scientists, both specialists in infectious diseases, who must put their marital resentments and professional

rivalries aside when a lethal virus is transported to the U.S. via an African monkey host. While the virus, and the panic it engenders, spreads like wildfire and hundreds die, the couple race to stop it. Director Wolfgang Peterson's previous genre efforts include *The Never-End-*

Huston Award. Meanwhile, Spielberg's new studio has been having talks with David Gates, the computer zillionaire, about a possible partnership in the interactive television network that Gates' company Microsoft hopes to launch through the Internet. Spielberg's been pretty Internet active himself, communicating through the global network with Sri Lanka resident Arthur C. Clarke about the developing script for *When Worlds Collide*.

Speaking of planet-wide destruction, you know that no one was happier than this writer about that big-budget *Godzilla* that Tristar had scheduled to start shooting in April. Unfortunately, the project seems unlikely to start anytime soon, if it happens at all.

Tristar and Jan de Bont, the veteran cinematographer who became a hot director with the success of *Speed*, reached a dead end as they attempted to nail down a budget for the film's elaborate effects sequences. The script, as submitted to the Digital Domain effects house, called for close to 500 effects shots, compared to 61 such shots in *Jurassic Park*; the conservative estimate of the project's costs was \$130 million, much of that going for abundant screen-time for the film's two monstrous stars, *Godzilla* and an evil Gryphon from outer space. Tristar was insistent that the picture not go forward until that figure was brought down.

Word has it that Tristar was pushing to have the film's effects cut in half, which would at least have held the budget to eight figures. De Bont apparently felt that was too great a compromise and left the project; Tristar issued a press release stating that the parting was entirely amicable, and that future De Bont projects would be warmly welcomed at the studio. De Bont is now turning his attention to the development of a script for *Speed 2*.

As we go to press, the latest word has it that Digital Domain has also stepped out of the picture, and the project is rumored to be dead. That may be so—but keep in mind that Tristar has a major investment in its own effects arm, Sony Pictures Imageworks. SPI's plan for the film relied on "suitimation" actors as well as digital imaging, at significantly lower cost; further, since Sony of America is the parent of both SPI and Tristar, all profits would remain "in the family." It was only at De Bont's insistence that the effects were assigned to an outside firm, so it seems unlikely that Digital Domain's departure is unwelcome in Tristar's executive offices. Our educated guess is that SPI's current efforts on the effects of



Outbreak's all-too-possible scenario pits Dustin Hoffman against a bug that could conquer the planet.

ing *Story* and *Enemy Mine*.

If *Outbreak* leaves you hungering for another story about a couple who falls in love as the Earth dies, the old Gregory Peck/Ava Gardner nuke film *On The Beach* is in production as a television miniseries, starring Bryan Brown and Rachel Ward.

Universal and Warner Brothers are working on a deal that will allow them to join forces in order to bring *Twister* to the screen, a mega-budgeted Steven Spielberg production written by Michael Crichton. Molded as a special effects thriller, the film will concern a troupe of bold scientists who risk all in their efforts to study tornadoes. Spielberg will pick up the twenty-third American Film Institute Life Achievement Award on March 2 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel; the gala evening, with plenty of clips from the maestro's films, will be subsequently telecast on NBC. In April, Spielberg will again be honored as he accepts the Artists' Rights Foundation John

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Johnny Mnemonic may determine whether Tristar will forge ahead with the *Godzilla* that all right-thinking Americans long to see.

When *Johnny Mnemonic* was featured in our last issue, it was scheduled for a release in January, a choice that had us a bit puzzled, that time of year being a traditional "dumping ground" for films that don't quite qualify against the heavy competition of the Christmas season. We chose to assume that Tristar was simply in a hurry to get the next Keanu Reeves vehicle onto the market.

Now Tristar has pushed the picture back to a summer release, an indication that they are sufficiently pleased with the work of neophyte director Robert Longo to put *Johnny* in contention with the heavyweights of summer.

And from here it looks like a heavy summer indeed. Using the Hollywood calendar, summer starts in May, and Savoy Pictures, the young upstart studio behind *The Walking Dead* and *Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde* (opening on April 12), take May's first weekend to open *Tales From the Hood*, an extended homage to the Amicus anthology films of the 1970s, told from a street-smart black perspective. The big guns arrive a bit later in the month; though New Line Cinema initially planned a late 1995 release for *Mortal Kombat*, they decided to give the effects unit a more leisurely schedule, and place the film in May. "It will be huge," confides our New Line source. Last year, we thought she was kid-



Richard Gere (left) is Lancelot and Sean Connery is his King in *First Knight*, an Arthurian romance from the director of *Ghost*.

ding when she said the same thing about *The Mask*, another May opener, so this time we're listening.

The weekend of May 26th is divided between the Mel Gibson medieval romance *Braveheart*, from Paramount, and Universal's effects spectacular *Casper*, adapted from the Harvey comic. Both Mel and the all-digital

friendly ghost will no doubt still be alive (in a manner of speaking) to do battle with this summer's other all-digital creature in *Species*, the MGM thriller of genetics gone wild, opening on June 9. On that very same day, Paramount will join the fray with Michael Crichton's *Congo*, directed by Frank Marshall and featuring Stan Winston-designed

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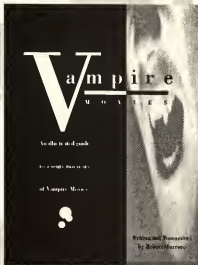
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apes. You'll have one week to catch up before *Batman Forever*, Warner Brothers' sole genre effort for the summer, opens on June 16.

The last week of June brings a one-two combination punch from Disney, and prospects are that their newest animated feature, *Pocahontas* (June 23), and the much-anticipated comic adaptation *Judge Dredd* (June 30) will put the entertainment giant at the top two spots on the box office charts, although Universal's *Apollo 13*—not science fiction, but an effects-filled Tom Hanks vehicle—goes head-to-head with *Dredd*. While *Dredd* might win the battle of the opening weekend, *Apollo 13* is a good bet to show *Gump*-like legs, playing throughout the summer and into fall.

Also opening June 30 is Renny Harlin's *Cuthroat Island*, from MGM; considering the general performance of pirate movies in the last few years, this placement seems unusually risky—but certainly MGM knows what competition they face; Harlin must be delivering one heckuva movie to inspire such confidence. If not, it's D.O.A.

The July and August release schedules remain up in the air as we go to press; among the genre films likely to pop up in those months, there's Tristar's *Johnny Mnemonic* (see last issue's "Hardwired Hero"). Columbia's *First Knight*, retelling the age-old legend of Camelot, stresses the romantic triangle of Lancelot (Richard Gere), Arthur (Sean Connery), and Guinevere (Julia Ormond). *Virtuosity*, a sci-fi/action epic, pits Denzel Washington against a supervillain that's escaped from a virtual reality environment into the real world (a plot remarkably similar to that of *GridRunners*, covered last issue). *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* is an inflated version of the kiddid phenomenon, with monsters realized by John Vulich and Everett Burrell's Optic Nerve Studios. And expect to make the third trip to medieval times this summer via Trimark's *A Kid in King Arthur's Court*, which Disney plans to release in the first week of August.

Late summer is also likely to see the release of *Waterworld*, which may have a hard time overcoming mountains of negative press centering on the picture's cost, estimated to be as high as \$165 million (Universal characterizes these estimates as wildly inflated). But the film will ultimately stand or fall on its story and production values, a fact that may be missed by film critics, who have a tendency to review a movie's budget rather than its merits.

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by *Speed's* Dennis Hopper, in another of his trademarked over-the-top performances. The only hope for the ragtag survivors is a lone defender, the Mariner (Kevin Costner), a man determined to aid them in their attempt at a new beginning. Universal is contemplating an August release.

Also up in the air is the release date for *Mary Reilly*, the Julia Roberts vehicle retelling the story of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* from the perspective of the doctor's maidservant, as adapted from Valerie Martin's novel. Rumor has it that the completed film has had very successful previews—except that audiences find the current ending “unfocused.” Rewrites of the final scenes were ordered, and reshoots should be completed by the time you read this.

It's startling to note that the summer schedule contains not a single remake of an old television series, though there seem to be dozens of them in the pipeline. *Highway Patrol*, the Broderick Crawford series, is in the works as a comedy/action vehicle for Tom Arnold, a featured player in *True Lies*. *Jaws* author Peter Benchley is writing a script based on the series *Sea Hunt*, with Lloyd Bridges being wooed to appear in the Mike Nelson, underwater detective role that he created; his son Jeff is likewise the candidate to star as Nelson's equally adventure-prone offspring. The Bridges await the script before making their decision. Kelsey Grammer of television's *Fraser* recently turned down the



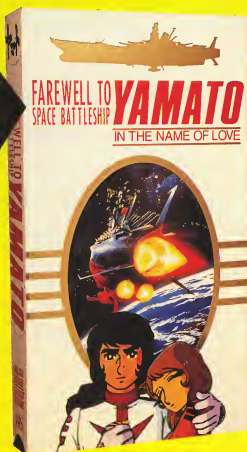
Kevin Costner, as the Mariner, battles for the last of humanity in *Waterworld*.

role of “Wilbur” in Disney's remake of *Mr. Ed*, reasonably repelled by the thought of playing second banana to a horse. Other series said to be on the way as features include *The Brady Bunch Movie*, *The Saint*, *My Favorite Martian*, and *F Troop*.

Especially intriguing is the possibility of a big-screen version of Patrick Magoohan's

surreal secret agent series *The Prisoner*. Polygram Filmed Entertainment recently bought ITC Entertainment, which owns the rights, for \$150 million, and trade observers suggest that the principal reason for this move was to make movie properties of ITC's numerous classic television series—a library that also includes Magoohan's previous series, *Secret*

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Agent, and the Gerry Anderson productions, *UFO*, *Space:1999* and *Thunderbirds*.

Anderson, by the way, is quite displeased with the manner in which U.S. distributors have recut and otherwise tampered with the *Thunderbirds* series, now off Fox television but available in syndication as *Turbocharged Thunderbirds*. In an interview planned to appear next issue, Anderson mentions possible legal action to have his name removed from credits and promotions for the show.

Leonard Nimoy is said to be considering offers to develop his *Primordials* comic book as a film; other late-breaking comic adaptation news that didn't make it into our "Panel to Screen" feature includes word that *Flash Gordon* is in development, fifteen years after his last cinematic outing. In contrast to that campy Dino DeLaurentis production, the new treatment, in a screenplay by David Goyer for Hearst Entertainment, treats Flash with proper space-hero respect. Goyer, an avid comic fan—and owner of over 10,000 comics—has numerous other comics-inspired projects in various stages of development, including *Blade*, as a Wesley Snipes vehicle for New Line; *Ghost Rider*, in development at Savoy; and, in an apparent attempt to corner the aging-hippie market, *Dr. Strange* at Columbia.

Fraser Heston—Charlton's son—will direct *Ground Zero* for Castle Rock Entertainment. The film, described as "Die Hard in a missile silo" concerns a terrorist plot to

activate a Cold War weapon. Jean-Claude Van Damme is considering the script for *Afterlife*, which would cast the action star as a man with a transplanted brain. His skull's new occupant is a scientist who poses a threat to a scientific cabal determined to kill him in this \$50 million production from Columbia. The script will romantically pair Van Damme with an older woman, the wife of the scientist. John Travolta, star of the movie *Pulp Fiction*, is currently developing a feature from the "pulp" sci-fi novel *Fear*, the story of a man who loses four hours from his life. The novel is the work of the late L. Ron Hubbard, the sci-fi writer who achieved near-godhood when he founded the Church of Scientology. New Line Cinema has signed William Friedkin to direct *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*, a project based on the recently discovered diaries of a London resident now thought by many to have been the infamous serial killer.

Jerry and David Zucker, the creative team behind *The Naked Gun*, say that Leslie Nielsen has requested that talks about the fourth *Gun* film be delayed until the conclusion of the O.J. Simpson trial. According to the brothers, Neilson said, "We'll have to take our time and wait and hope everything turns out for him...it's easy for people to make judgments, to think *Naked Gun* will start to shoot again without Simpson," though the actor concedes that "the next *Naked Gun* might happen without any of us."

Francis Ford Coppola is preparing a pilot for ABC from his feature film *The Conversation*. Kyle MacLachlan, in a role reminiscent of his days as Agent Cooper in *Twin Peaks*, plays a former government agent specializing in electronic surveillance. Joe Dante is also developing an ABC pilot, in the realm of science fiction, and Charlie Haas is writing a feature project for Dante entitled *Cat and Mouse*. Joe's old project *The Mummy* has once again died and come back; now, instead of George Romero, Mick Garris will be directing, and this time it looks pretty certain to go forward. Antonio Banderas has been cast, causing some to call the project "Banderas in Bandages." A few months ago, Anne Rice bought a two-page ad to retract her negative remarks about the casting of *Interview With the Vampire*. After the film opened, she bought eight full pages to review the film and to burn its critics at the stake (*Variety's* ad rates are \$6,000 per color page). Of Cruise, she said, "I like to believe Tom's *Lestat* will be remembered the way Olivier's *Hamlet* is remembered...Tom's power, knowledge, skill, magnetism and artistic integrity are part and parcel of the success of *IWTV*." She reserved her wrath for the newsweeklies that saw little of Shakespeare in her screenplay: "Time and Newsweek, you no longer play a significant role in covering the news surrounding the arts, or in covering the arts themselves...I've given up on you." I give up, too. See you next issue.

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By Dane Spotts



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Director Rachel Talalay brings the 21st century guerrilla gal, and all of her fuzzy buddies, to the big screen.

CYBERPUNK HEROINE Tank Girl

BY LISA MACCARILLO

FOR THOSE LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE ON THE correct geographical longitude, or hip enough to seek her out, Tank Girl—a scruffy-headed, kangaroo loving, super-tank driving, Department of Water hating, machine-gun loving iconoclast—is a hero. But, to this date, only a small, fiercely loyal international following know that. “Words diminish the essence of Tank Girl,” explains Rachel Talalay, director of the upcoming feature film inspired by the Girl’s comic strip appearances in the U.K.’s *Deadline* magazine, and published by Dark Horse Comics in the U.S. “The best way to understand her is to look at just one frame of the comic. That says so much more than any bull I could spout.”

Set in the year 2033 (or thereabouts), after a comet has hit the Earth, causing global catastrophes, the film explores a world in which water is as valuable as gold. Tank Girl (Lori Petty) and her friends, including a band of mutant kangaroo outlaws known as the Rippers, will do whatever they can to monkey with the evil Department of Water, who monopolize the valuable resource. “Tank Girl isn’t a super-hero,” says Talalay. “She doesn’t have superpowers and she’s not the woman who can beat the shit out of everybody. She uses other ways to get what she wants. The essence of Tank Girl is that she could be me when I was a kid and I was sent to the principal’s office, only where I always would

cry, she’d be in his face the whole time. Tank Girl is the alter-ego of a lot of teenagers, not just girls, but boys too.”

Talalay’s first hurdle in getting *Tank Girl* off the ground was convincing a studio that not only can a woman be an action hero, but that *Tank Girl* could hop into bed with a mutant kangaroo named Booga (played by Jeff Kober of TV’s *China Beach*) and still get something other than an X rating. “We tried to walk that fine line of pushing the envelope, but also saying that the movie is going to be funny and cool and not just so weird that it won’t work,” she says.

After two years in development, Talalay found a home for *Tank Girl* at the newly restructured MGM/UA. “John Calley, who was very much responsible for movies from a much more visionary period—like *A Clockwork Orange* and *Performance*—was very supportive of our ideas for *Tank Girl*,” she says.

No stranger to the workings of a studio, Talalay served in various capacities at New Line Cinema, where she cut her teeth on such weird and varied fare as the *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies, as well as the John Waters features *Cry-Baby* and *Hairspray*, which she produced. Talalay made the transition to directing with 1991’s *Freddy’s Dead: The Final Nightmare*, then followed it up with the similarly molded cyber-thriller *Ghost in the Machine* in 1993.

With *Tank Girl*, Talalay had finally found a project she could call her own. After her stepdaughter gave her the Penguin graphic novel for Christmas four years ago, she fell immediately in love with the character and shepherded



Tank Girl (Lori Petty) stands ready to trade death-dealing bullets for life-giving water.

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Truth Until Paradox

Edited by Staley Krause
and Stewart Wieck



THE WORLD OF
DARKNESS



“They were like a couple of kids in a candy shop. The comic’s creators said, ‘This is the ultimate compliment, seeing our work in real life.’”

the story from concept to shooting script to finished film, keeping the tone true to the irreverent, inventive, sometimes nihilistic, always surprising comic, written by Jamie Hewlett and Alan Martin. “We started with a pretty basic good-against-evil story, then just threw in the kitchen sink in terms of trying to make it as cool and different as the comic book,” Talalay notes. “*Tank Girl* is so outrageous on the page that she’s harder to translate to the screen than a Batman or a Superman—a lot harder.”

Because she so respected their original vision of *Tank Girl*’s world, Talalay involved Hewlett and Martin in many aspects of the production, including story, design, makeup, and special effects. “It

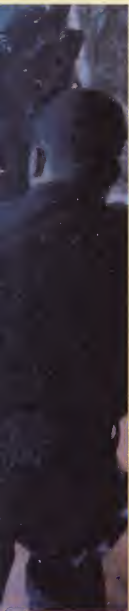
really mattered to me because when I was convincing them that I was the right person to bring *Tank Girl* to the silver screen, I said, ‘I want to keep you involved.’ I didn’t want

to simply get the rights from them and then say, ‘OK, goodbye, sorry,’” she says.

Hewlett helped in the production design of both the Department of Water, which Talalay describes as “very austere and *Blade Runner*-ish,” and the *Tank Girl* world, which closely resembles the comic strip. “One thing I love about Jamie’s designs are that there are fifty things on each frame,” says Talalay. “There are fifty little details, including a little caricature of himself in a corner. We can never get that wonderful richness of a page of the comic, but we absolutely went for the essence of his crazy, wonderful world.”

The production design team, lead by Catherine Hardwicke, got to work on bringing Hewlett’s elaborately imagined tanks and jets into tangible form. “We had a person here, Simon Merton, who took Jamie’s drawings and met them with practical considerations,” Talalay explains. “He took this absolute insane, impossible-to-afford tank that’s straight out of Jamie’s imagination and figured out how to alter a real tank, while still keeping the essence of Jamie.”

Their efforts paid off the first time Hewlett and Martin visited the set. Talalay describes the comic’s creators as being extremely nervous, but also “like a couple of kids in



a candy shop. They said, 'This is the ultimate compliment, seeing our work in real life.' They were thrilled with what we'd done, which was wonderful for me because I was very nervous."

Another critical task was casting the title role. After a much publicized series of casting calls in Los Angeles, New York and London, and the widely reported early departure of Emily Lloyd, who had initially been cast in the title role, Talalay was forced into an eleventh-hour decision which she now counts as a blessing.

Best known for her roles in *A League of Their Own* and *Point Break*, Lori Petty epitomizes the tough-yet-vulnerable qualities Talalay was seeking for Tank Girl. "What Lori brings to the role is not only comedy—because she is a great comedian—but real warmth," says the director. "A lot of people we met in the casting calls would have been perfect if we were doing a three-minute short where Tank Girl could step right off the comic book page and be that tough-as-nails, in-your-face Australian punk; but if you watched two hours of that, it would be like, enough! Stop! Lori's got that edge, but that's not all she's got—she has all the other dimensions, including an emotional dimension. You've got to know that she cares about people."

For a picture of this scope, the filmmakers needed a full-service effects team. After having seen new-edge effects technologies at work in the making of *Freddy's*

Dead and Ghost in the Machine, Talalay had fun with this aspect of the production. She hired effects veterans Bob and Denny Skotak of 4-Ward Productions to handle the miniatures and some of the other physical effects. "I have done a lot of special effects on much smaller budgets under much more difficult circumstances," she says. "So in a way the effects aspect, while still incredibly challenging, was not this big, nightmarish puzzle that's going to go out of control. I'm not going to diminish the incredible importance of the effects, but we were never overwhelmed by them. We've got some digital work and some stuff that we're still creating...I love that stuff."

Talay had specific design ideas of how to bring Hewlett's vision of the Rippers (a gang of mutant kangaroos) to life. "I didn't want my kangaroo people to be like the Mutant Ninja Turtles where you can only tell the difference between them if you're either six years old or know what color headband each wears," she says. "That became an interesting studio issue. Do you want to pay this kind of money for an actor who you're then going to completely cover in makeup? I wanted to design makeups that were very individualized and very much a part of the actors' faces. One of the Rippers is played by (rapper/action star) Ice T, and even though he's wearing a full makeup, I still



wanted him to look like Ice T."

With only a moderate effects budget (the overall budget for the picture is rumored to be between 20 and 30 million), Talalay was looking for a hungry up-and-comer who would give this project his or her all; instead, she scored big, signing legendary Academy Award-winner Stan Winston, fresh off his ground-breaking work on *Jurassic Park*. "I am the biggest Stan Winston fan in Hollywood based on what he did for us," she says. "We didn't have a huge budget to work with, but Stan Winston came to us and said, 'I really want to do this film and I'm going to figure out how to make it work.' Stan and his crew did a genius job and were so wonderful to work with. He did absolutely brilliant work."

Thanks to the comic character's heavy cult following, requests poured in from celebrities wanting to play cameo roles in the film. Names that have been banded about in connection with *Tank Girl* range from Billy Idol and Bjork (untrue) to Iggy Pop and En Vogue's Dawn Robinson (true). "I had to turn a lot of people down," the director says with a note of wonder in her voice. "I had to tell Billy

OPPOSITE: The feisty femme from the future falls into the hands of a gang of Water Department goons. ABOVE: Catherine Hardwicke's production design brings Hewlett's richly imagined hardware to throbbing life.



ABOVE: T.G. smiles with pride of ownership at her treaded arsenal. OPPOSITE: Malcolm McDowell, as Kesslee, menaces our rugged angel.

Idol, "Sorry, there just isn't a part. You don't really want to play a trooper who gets killed."

Perhaps in homage to one of Talalay's favorite films, she cast Malcolm McDowell in a key role. "I was very inspired for *Tank Girl* by Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*," says the director. "There are many individual geniuses out there that I'm constantly learning from and stealing from and that I admire. Making movies that are different is such a huge accomplishment in Hollywood today."

The soundtrack is also shaping up to be something special for today's disenfranchised post-punk crowd. "There's a great deal of interest from bands wanting songs on the

soundtrack," she says. "We've been sending out scenes and getting a really good response back." Though Talalay couldn't mention names in deference to contract negotiations, rumors about the Beastie Boys, Hole and Sonic Youth have been brewing in on-line circles.

Talay herself monitors the Internet via America Online. "I was a math major in college and a computer programmer before I got into the movie business, so there's a techno-nerd side to me," she says with a laugh. "They put my E-mail address in *Wired* magazine and I'm actually enjoying getting that E-mail. There's even a *Tank Girl* newsgroup (alt.fan.tank-girl) on the 'Net."

Much of Talalay's E-mail has been from hardcore fans worried that Hollywood will compromise the qualities they value in *Tank Girl*. As hard to please as studio execu-



“There are a lot of people out there who are going to be excited to discover Tank Girl for the first time and excited by what we have accomplished.”

I had to say, I don't care what they say, I'm handing this in with all these outrageous things in it, and if the studio doesn't like it, I'll go to an independent," she says. "So much of my upbringing was being told, 'Because you're a woman you can't do this,' and 'Women don't do that.' Even in Hollywood, with its 'boys' club,' part of what I'm trying to do is to break that. *Tank Girl's* a perfect example. I was told when I was taking it around that female action heroes don't work, period. And I was saying, I just don't think it was done right yet; I'm taking a different approach, and the fact that men and women alike really love this comic book is a real sign that it's worth trying. I think my attempts to break the conventional mold is what I share with *Tank Girl*."

Born in Chicago and raised in Baltimore, Talalay has gained a reputation for being grounded in the seriously weird through her early work with John Waters, known during his early career as "the prince of puke," and on a string of low-budget features, including *Sid and Nancy* and *The House on Sorority Row*. "I'm fifty percent completely conventional and fifty percent John Waters' producer," she says with a laugh. "I learned so much from John, who is incredibly committed to his own vision, and stronger than anybody I've ever worked with in terms of being his own filmmaker."

In the U.K., *Deadline Magazine* has begun running double-sized issues as fans count the days until *Tank Girl's* March 1995 release, and on the Internet, alt.fan.tank-girl virtually crackles with rumors of casting decisions, reports on magazine articles and TV show mentions, as well as rueful warnings to the filmmakers to stay true to the comic. MGM/UA tracks awareness of *Tank Girl* while Rachel Talalay races to cut together *Tank Girl's* movie debut. All want the same thing. "There's something about getting a film up in front of an audience and watching them have a really good time that is so magical," she says. "There's this incredible creative satisfaction of starting from scratch and developing a script and then finally watching yourself get it right or get it wrong. It's kind of indescribable." □

tives, *Tank Girl* fans flooded Talalay's on-line mailbox. "There's definitely a feeling in the E-mail I get of 'Don't let them make you soften things.' We're always going to get killed by the absolute hardcore. I especially know this from doing *Freddy's Dead* and working with John Waters. There were people who never forgave John for not being X-rated, and there were people who never forgave us for doing any sequels to *Nightmare on Elm Street*. There will be the people who will feel that I ruined *Tank Girl*, but I think there are a lot more people out there who are going to be excited to discover it for the first time and excited by what we have been able to accomplish."

Talay answers their urgency with her own imperative not to compromise *Tank Girl's* wild, gritty and unconventional heart. "There was a time in the script process when



The Mangler

BY ROBERT MARTIN

TOBE HOOPER SEEMS VERY glad to be home in Los Angeles. "I must have traveled a couple hundred thousand miles in the last year and a half," he says. "Spring in London, summer in Toronto, Israel, South Africa, Egypt, the whole thing...." He laughs, "At least I missed 'the big one,'" he says, referring to the recent L.A. quake. Of course, at the time we spoke, it was just beginning to rain in California....

Hooper's globe-hopping ways are not surprising given his recent association with veteran film producer Harry Alan Towers, best known in the

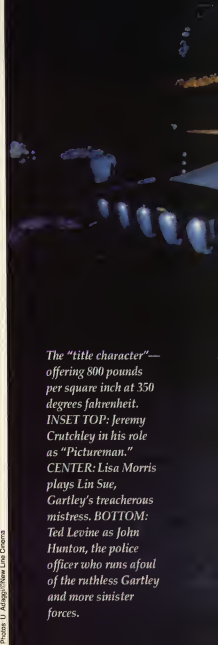
U.S. for a long string of non-Hammer Christopher Lee movies in the late '60s and early '70s (most notably, Lee's Fu Manchu series), and an equally long association with international "cult" director Jess Franco. The legend of Harry Towers includes his boast that he can "land in any country, anywhere, and have a movie deal going within twenty-four hours."

"How old is Harry Tow-

ers?" Hooper reacts to our query. "Gee, that's really impossible to tell. But he has been in the business a long time, he worked with ['30s-era producer] Alexander Korda, even. He's a remarkable, very charming guy." Hooper's first collaboration with Towers was on Tobe Hooper's *Night Screams*, an erotic thriller shot in Israel, which was slated for release through Cannon before that outfit went under. Currently no theatrical release is planned, and Warner Brothers holds the video rights.

Following *Night Screams*, Towers had no problem finding financing for another Hooper feature, given his connections in Europe, where American genre directors are valued more highly than they are in Hollywood. With financing in place, the only problem was that they had no script. "My attorney mentioned that there was a Stephen King property available," Hooper recalls. "It wasn't *'The Mangler'*, but another King story. We were looking into that when I came across *'The Mangler.'*"

At the time, rights to the King story were held by the producers of *Lawnmower Man*, and King had only recently been through a legal battle to remove his name from that film—a battle that had spilled over into per-



The "title character"—offering 800 pounds per square inch at 350 degrees fahrenheit. INSET TOP: Jeremy Crutchley in his role as "Pictureman." CENTER: Lisa Morris plays Lin Sue, Gartley's treacherous mistress. BOTTOM: Ted Levine as John Hunton, the police officer who runs afoul of the ruthless Gartley and more sinister forces.

Stephen King's tale of dirty laundry and industrial-strength evil comes to the screen in the hands of horror veteran Tobe Hooper.





ABOVE: A regrettable industrial accident—or something more sinister—breaks up the day for the crew of the Blue Ribbon Laundry. OPPOSITE TOP: William Gattley (Robert Englund) and Lin Sue conspire to bring the Mangler's dark desires to fruition. BELOW: Hunton and his companion Sherry (Vanessa Pike) struggle valiantly as the malicious machine closes in.

sonal resentment.

"He wasn't too happy about that situation," says Hooper. "I've known Steve since we did *Salem's Lot*, of course," Hooper says. "So I felt the thing to do was to clear it with him, that I wanted to pursue these rights and make a film that was true to the story." After getting King's blessing, Hooper and Towers entered a series of hard-fought, and eventually successful, negotiations.

"After getting the rights situation straightened out, I sat down with Steve Brooks, my writing partner, and we must have gone through thirty-five or forty drafts before I was happy with it, and later we went through additional re-writes when we came to grips with the realities of our location."

"Mangler" is actually the common name given to the machine that folds and presses clothing in any commercial laundry; in the King story, the action centers around one such machine and its preternatural, malevolent power. The man behind the machine, William Gattley, owner of the Blue Ribbon Laundry in the sleepy

New England town of Rykers Valley, is played in the film by that veteran of New Line's *Nightmare* series, Robert "Freddie Kreuger" Englund.

Englund's horror career actually started with a Tobe Hooper film, made long before his first *Nightmare*. "I'd taken a real liking to Robert way back when I saw him in a 1974 movie called *Buster and Billie*, as a rather scatter-witted albino character," Hooper says. "So when I was casting my first feature after *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*—the one that goes by about a dozen different titles [*Eaten Alive*, *Slaughter Hotel*, *Starlight Slaughter*, *Legend of the Bayou* etcetera]—I cast him in that, and he was terrific.

"I worked with him again when I directed the pilot for the TV series *Freddie's Nightmares*; we did the 'prequel' to the film series, where Freddie was burned to death for his crimes. So Robert and I have known one another for a long, long time, and it didn't take long for it to occur to me that Robert would be the perfect villain for this piece—and he is absolutely terrific in it.

"When we were just starting to feel out who this character Gattley was, I saw him as like the Everett Sloan character in *Lady From Shanghai*...but he evolved into a sort of a cross between Nixon and Lyndon Johnson, at about the age they'd be now.

"Gattley is a man who cares about

delivering—his place of business is his wife, really, and his business supports much of the economy in this town of Ryker's Valley; just about everything in town links back to the laundry, and to the evil at the center of it. For me, it's about the roots of the industrial revolution, greed and power, and the values that dictate a person will do what they have to do to make something work.

"The interior of the laundry, and the character played by Robert Englund, are sort of frozen in time, throwbacks to the beginning of the industrial age; while, outside of the laundry, it's small-town Maine in the 1990s."

Pitted against Gattley is Police Officer John Hunton (Ted Levine, who played the insane Buffalo Bill in *Silence of the Lambs*), whose job it is to investigate the series of violent industrial mishaps occurring at the laundry. "Ted's role really grounds the film in reality, while his brother-in-law, Mark (Daniel Matmor), fancies himself an amateur parapsychologist," says Hooper, "so we have these two attitudes playing against each other, outside of the scenes within the laundry."

A final bit of unusual casting involved the role of "Pictureman," a veteran police photographer. "The guy was supposed to be about ninety years old and in very poor health," says Hooper. "I wanted William Burroughs to play the part, but he was

having health problems and couldn't make the trip down there. And then I filled the quota of American actors that I could bring down." Unable to find a South African actor of sufficient age and skill to play the part, Hooper cast a younger man, the British South African actor Jeremy Crutchley, in the role. "I got him to study Burroughs' performance in *Drugstore Cowboy*," says Hooper, "and damned if the guy didn't just turn into something way beyond what I'd been looking for. This guy is going to go a long way—just an extraordinary talent."

Visual effects for the film were supervised by Hooper's co-writer, Stephen Brooks. "Steve actually comes from an effects background; he worked on *Dick Tracy* and a number of other pictures in that capacity, but his true love is writing. When it came to effects, it was great having someone on that end who knew my tastes and exactly what I needed for the purposes of the script."

One of the principal effects tasks, though less flashy than the film's climax, involved transforming rural South Africa into small-town Maine, accomplished through matte paintings done by effects veteran Harrison Ellenshaw. "In the movie, it looks exactly like small-town Maine, and there's not a single tell-tale sign that mattes were used," Hooper notes. "It still amazes me, what can be done with computers. When you see a movie nowadays, there's no telling where a totally computerized effect ends and the in-the-camera stuff begins."

The look of the title "creature" (if we can call it that) is from designs by Hooper's adult son, Tony Hooper, who has worked in a design capacity on several films prior to this collaboration with his famous father. "It's the most massive working prop I've ever seen," says Hooper, "about the size of a steam locomotive, and took about four months to build, equipping it with the mechanics to do all that we needed, with a lot of solid steel construction. We had to take a lot of safety precautions, working around that thing."

Hooper characterizes the shoot as a director's dream. "I had a wonderful guy on camera, Amnon Solomon, and his gaffer, Danny Ben Menachen, and they helped a lot in giving the film a very stylized look; and my associate producer, Rita Bartlett, did the impossible by getting the American crew, the South African crew, and the Israeli crew to meld into a seamless whole. That's never easy, but on an international shoot like this, it's amazing."

The dream was nearly shattered when shooting the film's peak

moment, a mechanical metamorphosis of the mangler. "I had about three days of shooting left when we shot that, and it just didn't work. The thing stood up and fell apart, like it had a bomb inside or something; this thing was really scattered. Luckily, our backup plan, to go with a computer graphics transformation, turned out better than I'd ever hoped. While they were doing the effects, I dropped in on them every day, to make my suggestions; they'd take them and add to them—subtleties of movement and little things to just give that added dimension of reality. These people are very good."

Of course, when dealing with a King adaptation, one must always ask about the transformation of King's prose into cinema; Hooper's slant on this question is pragmatic. He says, "One thing I'd found in doing *Salem's Lot* is that to be true to the story, and also to create a film atmosphere in which the events of the story are possible, can, at certain points, present problems."

"On *The Mangler*, the expansion of the short story was mainly in the person of Gartley. In the story, Gartley was something like the character of Barlowe in *Salem's Lot*; someone whose presence was felt even when he wasn't there, someone who was pulling strings, but that you didn't see so much. For the film, the role of Gartley was expanded somewhat, and brought to the foreground, giving the film a certain focus."

"Another difference between the short story and the film is that the film takes place in a twenty-four hour period, so that the correspondence between real time and film time gives the story a certain amount of drive. It's one long bad day for everybody in the movie. It's set up like an array of dominoes that fall into each other, split into several paths—bifurcate, trifurcate and come back into the center. And, in this story, at the center is the machine."

Given its title, and the collective reputations of King, Hooper and



England, one might well expect *The Mangler* to be an exceptionally graphic film; and, in fact, much graphic violence was shot. Unfortunately for the fans of over-the-top grue and gore, the film ratings board saw to it that much of this footage was trimmed from the release version. Hooper, who allows that a special unrated version may later be released, is unfazed by the mandated changes. "I don't feel badly about it at all," he says. "In most of the scenes involved, suggestion is good enough all by itself—just the idea of someone going through this evil machine—being pressed and folded with 800 pounds per square inch of pressure and 350° of steam, backed up by what you can do with sound effects and so on...it all works very well."

Hooper's next project is *The Dentist*, for Orion Pictures, from a script that one of our Hollywood spies tells us is among the funniest, and scariest, scripts he's read in a long time. "Yes, it's all of that," says Hooper. "And we're working on a bit of casting now that I just can't talk about yet, because we haven't quite signed him—but it'll be a big surprise. I'm really looking forward to this one." □

CHRISTOPHER LAMBERT: THERE IS ONLY ONE

BY TANYA ANN FLETCHER

Though the singular actor is busy enough for two, he finds the time to chat about his work in Highlander, The Hunted and Mortal Kombat.

THERE ARE TWO SIDES

to Christopher Lambert, the renowned international actor who debuted in *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan* and within a year garnered the Cesar Award (the equivalent, in France, of an Oscar) for his performance in Luc Besson's surreal *Subway*. What is most apparent to his legions of fans is his sensitive action hero side—the egalitarian gentleman capable of easy camaraderie with his friends and tenderness with his intimates, yet just as capable of decapitating his enemies with one swift swash of his sword. His other side is the calm, reserved professional, continually striving to diversify his already eclectic screen career.

"I love to act because it allows me to be different people and to do things I wouldn't be able to do in real life," says Lambert. "So obviously I lean toward the fantasy epics, since of course that gets me away from the reality of everyday life. But that doesn't mean one day I won't do a love story."

With the start of 1995, Lambert may finally enjoy the level of stardom that has eluded him over the years, in spite of his consistent film output. With three films releasing within the first six months of this year, audiences will not easily forget the thirty-six-year-old actor's chiseled mug (and bod), if the publicity machine does its job.

Even though it is the third *Highlander* film, *Highlander: The Final Dimension* is the "official" sequel to the original fantasy epic released in 1986, which dealt with a race of immortals who roam the centuries engaged in battle and mass decapitations. This third film resumes the story where the first one left off, simply ignoring the existence of the second, *Highlander 2: The Quickening*. The newest *Highlander* pits Lambert's character, Connor McCloud, against Mario Van Peebles as a shape-shifting magician who is determined to become "the one" by separating McCloud and his immortal head.





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Last year, the same two actors appeared in the action thriller *Gunmen*, as antagonists who ultimately joined forces. In the third *Highlander*, however, they're out for each other's heads to the bitter end.

"Mario's pretty scary in the film, and he shows his dark sense of humor," notes Lambert, who says their chemistry in *Gunmen* was a minor factor in the casting for *Highlander*. "People thought we worked well together, but it wasn't planned that way. It came out of the blue when Miramax asked what I thought about Mario playing the bad guy, and I went for it."

After the miserable critical and box-office reception given to *Highlander 2*, one wonders why Lambert would return to the role at all. Lambert is, in fact, fully aware of the large cult following that *Highlander* has gained in the years since its first release, and the disappointment of fans in *The Quickening*. And the star is just as displeased with the picture as the fans.

"I basically did this picture because of *The Quickening*," says Lambert. "With that one I wanted to do a real sequel and couldn't. That's why we made the third one, to go back to the qualities that made the first film work."

"McCloud had been a fun character in the first film, and I wanted to finish the trilogy with a real *Highlander* movie. If we had called *Highlander 2* by a different name, people would have said 'cool movie.' The problem is, that picture had nothing to do with *Highlander*."

"It was a producer decision. They said, 'we want to do a sequel that has nothing to do with the original,' and I said, 'the purpose of doing a sequel is that people would like to

see what they loved in the first one in a different way.'"

"The problem was, they wanted to explain who these guys are and why they are immortals—and nobody cared. They didn't ask in the first one *why* they were immortal. They were immortals—period. That was the first mistake. The second mistake was to set the movie in the future. The third one was to say we came from another planet. And then it was a mistake to bring Sean Connery back. We had already established the rule that when an immortal gets his head chopped off, he's dead, and then we brought him back."

"I would like to have had Sean Connery back in *this* one instead, with a transition in the past—before Scotland, maybe. But we didn't bring him back because he had died twice already."

"By the end of the day, we didn't have a story—but I had to do the movie because I was signed to it. It's pretty difficult to do a movie when you don't know where you're going with it, so when they approached me for the third, I said, 'Listen, if we go back to the original, I'll read it and I might do it.'"

Filmed from a script written by Gregory Widen while he was still a film student at UCLA, the original *Highlander* met with overwhelming foreign success and a lukewarm response in the States; but its U.S. cult following has only grown over the years.

"It was just badly promoted," Lambert explains. "But it is very difficult to pick a movie and say that it's going to be a hit. Each time I hear friends of mine saying a certain movie is going to be huge, it usually comes out and it's a flop."

"So I do movies I care about. You try to do

your best and if it's a hit, great. If it's a flop, it's a flop. You cannot calculate it. It just works out that way. So I did *Highlander* and it eventually became a cult movie all of a sudden, and no one expected that."

FANS HAVE MADE MUCH OF THE "cut footage" from *Highlander*, a total of eight minutes trimmed from the print originally submitted to the MPAA ratings board which was found to be "too violent" for the desired rating. Lambert opines that little was lost in the cutting—mostly head-butts and impaling—but laments the loss of one two-minute scene that pits Connor against a gang of Nazis. "It was important because it explained the character Rachel, my assistant in the antique store," he says. "It had a purpose—it was also a touching scene." The flashback showed that "Rachel was really a little girl I found during World War II that I adopted as my daughter, who in 1986 could have been my mother. So again, it was an interesting idea, because it's exactly what this guy's life was about. Here we had this little girl whose parents were killed and he was taking this little girl with him, who grew up, and one day she was forty-five, fifty—and so their relationship had been constantly changing."

As we spoke, *The Final Dimension* had not yet opened, but Lambert already counted it an artistic success, a success he credits largely to the talented team behind it, including screenwriters Brad Mirman, Paul Ohl, William Panzer, and especially director Andy Morahan, a British rock video veteran.

LEFT: The magician Kane (Mario Van Peebles) is freed from 300 years of captivity to seek the head of Connor McCloud. RIGHT: McCloud finds Nokono (Mako), his new swordmaster, in the Far East.

"We wanted to have the Russell Mulcahy of the '90s, so we were looking for someone who was as visual as Russell and we found Andy," says Lambert. "He did a fantastic job and we also had a strong story this time. We stayed away from pure science fiction by having the movie set in the future. We went back with a transition between the past and present and going back to the love story to show the romantic side of the character."

AFTER THE SPRAWLING VISTAS OF THE *Highlander* series, Lambert segues into big-city intrigue with his starring role in *The Hunted*. Owing a seed of inspiration to Richard Connell's classic and oft-filmed story "The Most Dangerous Game," Lambert plays businessman Paul Racine, who is on a trip to Japan when he witnesses the murder of a mysterious woman (Joan Chen). He makes the deadly mistake of interfering and barely escapes with his life. Injured and far from home, he now has a lethal assassin (John Lone) in pursuit.

"My character is in a country where he doesn't speak the language, he doesn't have any friends, and he's not a killer—he's a business guy. The concept is how far can you push a human being before he reacts and fights back. What's great is, he's a complete fish out of water in modern Japan being chased by these assassins. What's interesting is, every one of us has this survival instinct but we don't know at what point it's going to come out because we're so civilized. Are we going to be able to survive in the wilderness being chased and what are we going to do to protect ourselves?"

The fact that Lambert seems a logical choice for such a role clarifies the difference between Lambert and the other contenders in the action-hero sweepstakes. There's no way you can picture Stallone or Schwarzenegger comfortable in the guise of an average business man thrust into an action situation. Lambert can successfully display a vulnerable, human side before he goes into action.

"You can say 'action hero' but it's nice if you don't see it immediately," says Lambert. "If you don't see immediately that this guy is the hero, the question is, how is he going to get out of this situation because he doesn't seem very strong."

Lambert's third feature to unravel before we reach the midpoint of 1995 could become his most successful film to date, *Mortal Combat*. In this live-action adaptation of the video game, Lambert plays Lord Raydon, the God of Speed and Lightning, who must defend the earth in a tournament to the death.



Lambert expects that *MK* will offer something more than the recent spate of games-gone-big-screen. "The problem with something like *Super Mario Bros* or *Street Fighter* is that you don't have a story," says Lambert. "The only thing they do is kick people's ass at every corner of every street, and after ten or fifteen minutes, it becomes very tiring. I'd rather play the game—or go watch a kick boxing event. *Mortal Combat* works as a story."

"I originally thought I didn't want to do a movie based on a video game, but when I read the script, it was a saga and something you could follow. It's a mythical story and much deeper than a typical action movie. You really have something for everybody and something you can enjoy." The Paul Anderson film will be released this May by New Line Cinema.

In addition to his front-of-the-camera activities, Lambert has joined the ranks of successful film producers, with executive producer credits on the modestly-budgeted French comedy *Nine Months* and its American remake. The Chris Columbus-directed comedy, starring Hugh Grant, will be released by 20th Century Fox this summer.

"*Nine Months* is about a man who has to cope when his wife decides to have a baby, and he's very scared and unsure about it as we follow the nine months of pregnancy through his perspective. It's pure comedy."

Though born in Great Neck, New York, Lambert enjoyed multiple citizenship thanks to his father's career in the French diplomatic corps. After finishing high school, he went through a series of odd jobs before pursuing his dream full time. After two years of study at the Paris Conservatory, he landed his big break in *Greystoke*—and Warner Bros. has been talking about doing a sequel ever since. At this point, Lambert doubts he would be involved, indicating that Warner's ideas for *Greystoke II*, although true to the roots of

Tarzan's pulp origins, betray Hudson's elegant version in the same manner as *The Quickening* betrayed *Highlander*.

"They've been talking about it for eight years," says Lambert. "They want to do it and they can do it.... I don't like the script. I don't think *Greystoke* should be touched as a sequel. It's a movie on its own, a finished movie and I don't want to go back to do it. Their script has him involved in World War I, and he goes against the Germans and the English in his loincloth—come on, it sounds like a B-movie."

Lambert has not ruled out the possibility of appearing in *Fortress 2*, the sequel to his 1993 SF/prison epic, directed by Stuart Gordon. The picture was ready to shoot earlier this year—until both Lambert and Gordon rejected the script, which set the action on an orbiting penal colony.

"To be frank, nobody is attached except the writer, 20th Century Fox, and the producers," says Lambert. "They don't have a director and they really haven't got a script yet. The current script concept for *Fortress 2*, though, is interesting."

By the time you read this piece, Lambert will once again be up to his ears in action, as he goes before the cameras on location in Norway. In *Alaska*, Lambert will play an Indian homesteader pitted against ten killers who are after his land. Asked if he longs for a rest, Lambert indicates that he wants to keep the momentum going—and he continues to search for quality scripts and fresh directors to bring their own unique slant to his film persona.

"I've had a few directors who try to copy somebody else," he says, "but most of them—Stuart Gordon, Andy Morahan and Paul Anderson, certainly—they're good because it's coming from them. Not from anyone else's idea of success."

"To me, that's talent." □

Comic Book Heroes: From Panel TO SCREEN

COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS HAVE INSPIRED successful movies since the 1930s, but with the success of *Batman* and its sequel, *Batman Returns*, motion picture companies have realized that such movies and TV shows carry instant brand recognition and a built-in audience that can help bring in much-needed capital. And last year, the unexpected success of a little-known comic company (little known to all but millions of comics fans, that is) put Dark Horse Comics on the map and made comics the hottest property in tinseltown.

And right now, there isn't a comic hotter than *Spawn*, published by Todd McFarland's Image Comics. New Line Cinema, which brought *The Mask* to the screen last summer, currently has the rights to McFarland's agent from hell; though the project remains strictly under wraps, the word is that a writer and director are in active development, with Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) tapped for the film's

In recent years, comic book properties have enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in Hollywood. But the translation isn't always easy.

BY DAVE GALVAN





Dark Horse Comics is either the luckiest or the hardest-working licenser in Hollywood.

extensive effects. Like ILM's dinos for *Jurassic Park*, the *Spawn* character will be 100 percent computer animated.

HBO is also currently in talks with McFarland about doing a series of animated specials based on other present and future Image titles. Should it come to pass, this would be HBO's first foray into animation for adults. Peter Chung, who worked on such projects as *Phantom 2040* and MTV's *Aeon Flux*,

is said to be a likely choice for the animation team.

The HBO pictures wouldn't be the first appearance of an Image Comics title on the small screen. Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s* is currently a CBS Saturday morning cartoon series. Produced by Nelvana, the series is a ratings hit but has not pleased Image's many fans with its stiff, boring animation and juvenile storylines.

No one anticipated this disappointing result when CBS first optioned four Image comics: *Youngblood*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *Savage Dragon* and *Freak Force*. *Freak Force* was the first to drop out of the mix, when CBS decided to take a pass. The other three remained under consideration as a possible ninety-minute block, until *Youngblood*

creator Rob Liefeld pulled out of CBS, to subsequently engage in an extended legal battle over 2,000-plus *Youngblood* animation cels and the master tape of two presentation pieces with Roustabout, the independent animation company that Liefeld's Extreme Studios had hired to help sell the show. Claims and counterclaims flowered, culminating in a million-dollar lawsuit posed by Roustabout last summer. In November, the whole affair was settled out of court in a deal protected by a non-disclosure agreement, but the grapevine tells us that Roustabout received a fat sum, while Liefeld has taken *Youngblood* to Fox, where the property is under serious consideration. (Another Image title, Marc Silvestri's *Cyberforce*, is in production at Fox as a six-episode mini-series.)

Meanwhile, back at CBS, *Savage Dragon* was given a green light—which suddenly turned red for no known reason, irritating creator Erik Larsen to no end.

This left *WildC.A.T.s* as the only broadcast show to actually emerge from the initial four-title deal. Even the folks at Jim Lee's Homage studios aren't too impressed with the results. When asked about the series, one staffer remarked, "Well, at least it's bringing us money!"

Dark Horse Comics is either the luckiest, or the hardest-working, licenser in Hollywood; they had

numerous projects lined up well before the highly successful adaptation of *The Mask* last summer, and the follow-up success of *Timecop*. Dark Horse Entertainment and New Line Cinema are currently putting a script together for *The Mask 2*, which will supposedly start shooting by the end of 1995, after Jim Carrey fulfills his commitment to two other films. Carrey was signed for the sequel while the first film was still in postproduction, at a time when the buzz was out that the film was going to make him a big, big star—and word that Carrey got a \$7 million deal for the sequel helped that rumor to come true.

A second installment is also in the works for *Timecop*, the sci-fi/action vehicle for Jean-Claude Van Damme. According to Dark Horse Entertainment head Mike Richardson, Mark Verheiden (the talented Dark Horse comic book writer who drafted scripts for both *Timecop* and *The Mask*, interviewed in the October 1994 issue of *SFE*), is crafting the screenplay.

Expect Dark Horse comics to reach the screen on an accelerated schedule, thanks to a nine-picture deal the company has signed with Universal; *Barb Wire* is scheduled to start filming in April; Paul Chadwick has turned in a rewrite on the script to his popular character Concrete, which will be produced by Larry Gordon. (Your reporter has read the earlier draft, which was already wonderful.) *Acci-*

dent Man is also in development, as well as *Virus*, written by Chuck Pflar with Gale Anne Hurd (*Aliens*, T2) producing. Other films in development with Universal include *Machine Pit Bulls* and *Black Cross*. The Dark Horse Entertainment/Universal deal will also encompass original projects (though comics will likely reach the stands as the films are released), including *Church League* and a fantasy entitled *Al and Gene*, co-created by Mike Richardson and Mark Verheiden.

Dark Horse also sees television as ripe for conquest; *The Mask* cartoon series will air on CBS this fall, debuting with a special hour-long episode before the show moves into its regular time slot, which is yet to be determined. Earlier reports of CBS trying to get Jim Carrey to do the voice ended with the announced casting of Rob Paulson to voice our hero.

Dark Horse's other television projects include *Enemy*, which is very close to becoming a TV show next fall, and, in a more experimental vein, a lica (a film of storyboards) is being produced based on the comic *Big Boy and Rusty the Robot*, with the comic's creators on board, Frank Miller (whose film credits include *Robocop II* and *III*) writing, and Geoff Darrow doing the storyboards.

While Dark Horse looks like a winner, the character stable of DC comics has enjoyed screen success for longer than anyone, and it will take some doing for the feisty independent to catch up. On Fox, *The Adventures of Batman and Robin* (formerly *Batman: The Animated Series*) continues to win its time slot (beating out Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.S.*) and has five new episodes lined up for broadcast this year. The success of this series has prompted Warner Brothers to produce *Superman: The Animated Series*, scheduled to debut on Fox in 1996, with much of the same talent who brought the dark knight to the screen on board.

Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman continues to enjoy moderate success. While the ratings are not exactly burning up the airwaves, the show is making money, and critics like the show enough for ABC to give it further opportunity to cultivate an audience. Another incarnation may be in store for the Man of Steel: Jon Waters, from the production team behind *Batman*, is developing *Superman—Reborn* as a motion picture. If it happens, the picture will make a complete break from the Christopher Reeve series of films, with an entirely new cast.

Batman Forever has completed filming in Los Angeles and New York. As you surely must know, Michael Keaton



officially dropped out of the title role last July, walking away from a seven-figure payday. Although creative differences were cited, the real reason Keaton did not want to return was lack of attention to the Batman character in Warner's freak-filled scripts. Fearful of being transformed into an upscale Adam West, Keaton went to Warner Brothers and purposefully asked for \$15 million in order to obtain release from his contractual obligations.

Val Kilmer has signed a three-picture deal with Warner Brothers to play Batman in the current film and at least two sequels, assuming *Batman Forever* does well enough to warrant them. To accommodate this younger casting, Rene Russo, who was to be Keaton's

love interest, was replaced by Robin Wright. Tommy Lee Jones is playing Two-Face, as well as his alter ego, District Attorney Harvey Dent (played in the first film by Billy Dee Williams). Jim Carrey, eager to do an ensemble piece after his first few outings as a genuine film star, jumped at the chance to play the Riddler after Robin Williams, dissatisfied with the size of his part, dropped out. Pat Hingle will return as Commissioner Gordon, and Lloyd Gough will also reprise his role as Alfred the Butler, who will be more prominently featured in this adventure. Ed

LEFT: Produced by Netvana, Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.S.* is currently a hit CBS Saturday morning cartoon series.

ABOVE: Michele Pfeiffer as the Catwoman in *Batman Returns*.



ABOVE: The Tick gives his trusty sidekick Arthur a bone crushing bearhug. BELOW: Christopher Reeve is the Man of Steel in Superman. OPPOSITE: Lou Ferrigno plays Bruce Banner's alter ego in *The Incredible Hulk*.

Begley, Jr., Drew Barrymore, and Chris O'Donnell (as Robin) fill out the cast.

I recently had the opportunity to view some of the new production designs, including the newly refurbished Batman costume (one notable development: he will now be able to turn his head to the left or right any time he wants to). The

Batcave will again get a facelift, as will the Batmobile, which will be smaller and sportier than it appeared in the previous two films. There is a new Batwing, which is stored hanging upside down from the ceiling of the Batcave and takes off by dropping into a launching tunnel, to blast off from the side of a mountain.

Jim Carrey's Riddler costume is reminiscent of the Frank Gorshin model from the '60s TV series—green tights with black question marks, as well as a green business suit with question marks for more formal affairs. And the rubber-faced actor will be literally rubber-faced; his looks for the film will be transformed by some subtle facial prosthetics.

In contrast to DC's running luck with movies and TV shows, over at Marvel Comics, the luck continues to run sour. After the embarrassing treatment *Captain America* was given by producer Menachem Golan in the 1990 movie of the same name, Marvel made the wise decision to buy back all of the rights to all of their characters so they could be more selective in assigning those rights to production entities. As it turned out, the only property they were unable to

get back was *The Fantastic Four*.

That property had been licensed to the German company behind *Das Boot*, Neue Constantine; a couple of years ago, NC's top executive, Bernd Eichinger, subcontracted Roger Cornman to produce a low-budget *Fantastic Four* movie.

The Fantastic Four had an extremely slim budget, well under the "announced" budget of \$2 million, but the project drew a number of young Hollywood talents—

Neue Constantine, by financing the film, had exercised their option and therefore retained sequel rights through several more years—even though the original film will never see the light of day. Needless to say, the young talents who worked overtime "for love" still have a bad taste in their mouths from that deal.

Last year, word was leaked that 20th Century Fox would partner with Neue Constantine in a \$50 million production of *The Fantastic Four*, with Chris (Home Alone) Columbus directing, but little has been heard about that project since.

Marvel's move to control its characters seems more likely to bear fruit elsewhere. *The Incredible Hulk* is in development at Universal, with ILM expected to provide Masklike effects and morphs to create the title creature. Richard Donner, whose *Superman* remains the best of the Christopher Reeve series, still hopes to direct *X-Men*, after completing *Assassins* with Sean Connery for Warner Brothers. And Cage is in development with Ed Pressman, of *Conan* and *The Crow*.



including the Emmy-winning makeup effects studio Optic Nerve (of *Babylon 5*) and extensive computer-generated effects by Scott Billups—who were willing to work on *Fantastic Four* at a fraction of their accustomed pay. What these bold volunteers did not know was that the film would not only remain unreleased, but that there was never any intention of releasing it.

But none of these films entice the fans—or make them as crazy—as the up-and-down prospects of a mega-budget *Spider-Man* epic. James Cameron was supposed to have started production on the picture well before this, but Peter Parker is currently caught in a tangled legal web. It all started in 1989, when Marvel made a deal with 21st Century (the outfit guilty of *Captain America*) for the rights to Spidey. During hard financial



times, 21st Century struck a deal with Viacom for the TV broadcast rights. They also assigned feature rights to Carolco, with Columbia/TriStar getting the home video rights. Now 21st Century, who sees a large bucket of cash for themselves, is battling

over the validity of that agreement, while former 21st Century head Menachem Golan (whose crimes include *Superman IV* and *Masters of the Universe* as well as *Captain America*) is fighting to get a producer credit on the film when it gets made. Carolco, which

is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, has also filed suit against Viacom and Columbia/TriStar to obtain video and television rights. Viacom has filed suit against Carolco and 21st Century claiming that an earlier agreement with 21st Century, not only gave them the rights for television, but also the right of first refusal on a feature film. Add to this mess MGM, who is also threatening a lawsuit, claiming that they have a separate prior agreement with Marvel Entertainment to pro-

duce a *Spider-Man* movie.

Are you following all of this? James Cameron, meanwhile, is bound by contract to make *Spider-Man* his next film, unless a court decides that Carolco doesn't own the rights after all. Cameron has publicly stated that his *Spider-Man* will be dark and brooding, like *Batman* (original, eh?). A source close to Cameron has confirmed to me that he is pushing to get Arnold Schwarzenegger to play Dr. Octopus. Cameron is also looking at the possibility, a few years down the road, of making a live-action *Wolverine* film.

The one bright spot on Marvel's media horizon is *The Spectacular Spider-Man* cartoon, airing on the Fox kids network to excellent ratings and a warm welcome from fans. The funny thing is that the only reason Fox decided to broadcast the cartoon was because they thought the movie would be out by now!

Topping off Marvel's embarrassing year is the syndicated *Marvel Action Hour*. The series, which stars Iron Man in one half-hour and the Fantastic Four in the second, premiered with a fanfare, touting computerized animation, star celebrities doing voices, and a cartoon that looks like a typical Marvel comic come to life. What actually arrived is computer animation for five seconds a show (the same footage every week), celebrity voices that do not belong in the series at all (Robert

Hayes from *Airplane!* doing the voice of Iron Man), and, worst of all, a cartoon that looks like a typical Marvel comic come to life—but just barely.

The toy line from this series was supposed to come out at Christmas but was delayed, and the buzz around Marvel Animation is that this series is deadlier than Elvis.

There just might be some good news in Marvel's quest for a quality TV show. S.C. Dacy of Alpha Productions has approached Marvel Comics about producing a new TV series based on *The Punisher*. The rights to the character are tied up with Marvel and what is left of New World pictures, who made the never-released film *The Punisher* as a Dolph Lundgren action vehicle. Dacy is speaking with people at the Paramount TV network about the show, who like the idea so far; and if they are interested, it is safe to say that Marvel will not say no. Whether the rights will be easily untangled is another question.

While the "big four" comic companies may make more news with their characters, other companies are finding some luck with theirs as well.

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The one bright spot on Marvel's horizon is *The Spectacular Spider-Man* cartoon.





MOUNTING 'MADNESS'

The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our own frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

—H.P. Lovecraft, from *The Call Of Cthulhu*

ON FIRST READING, THE SCREENPLAY TO *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS*—a pastiche from the writings of H.P. Lovecraft formed into a new story of “the Outer Gods”—seemed like a project tailored for John Carpenter, a man whose respect for the literary roots of horror are well known. It also seemed that many of the major elements in the screenplay were derived from Carpenter’s own past work. For instance, the image of Mrs. Pickman’s final tentacled form would fit comfortably in Carpenter’s version of *The Thing*. The church that dominates the town of Hobb’s End points back to a similar edifice in *Prince of Darkness*. Like *They Live*, the movie displays another level of reality, one far more horrible than the world we know, just out of reach of our normal perceptions. And set for the most part in a sleepy little town, much like the one in *The Fog*.

But when I suggested my theory to Carpenter, he hadn’t the foggiest notion what I was getting at, until I went through the above list. “Oh, I see, I hadn’t

John Carpenter’s most recent film is a tribute to a writer who shaped his own perception of horror.

BY ROBERT MARTIN

SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT

SCI-FI CHANNEL

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PREVIOUS SPREAD and LEFT: Sam Neill as John Trent whose dreams offer him early signs that our world is subject to a dark invasion. BELOW: Carpenter and Neill consult on the set.

noticed all of that," he said. "And I guess it makes sense, except that I wasn't involved in the development at all. It was a property that Michael DeLuca had been developing since 1987. I had read it at an earlier stage and passed on it, then he worked on it some more. I think another director was involved for a time, but he moved on and they passed it by me again, and I found it a lot more interesting. After I came in, I was involved in the final polish, but all those elements were there."

If there is a link to be made between the screenplay's elements and Carpenter's own myths, it is perhaps the debt that Carpenter—and that everyone in modern horror—owes to Howard Phillip Lovecraft. The writer, who wrote from 1917 until his suicide in 1937, was the driving force of a revolution in storytelling style that primarily took place in the pages of a cheap pulp magazine called *Weird Tales*.

Though Lovecraft had little worldly acclaim in his lifetime, in *Weird Tales* he, along with Clark Ashton Smith and Robert E. Howard, was revered by the readership. And, to a greater extent than Smith or Howard, Lovecraft inspired talented youngsters like Ray Bradbury and Robert Bloch to write for the magazine's pages. Lovecraft, and the writers he influenced (particularly Bloch, who only recently passed away) are the necessary link between the classic work of Poe and the modern school of horror writing.

Lovecraft's influence is deeply felt in modern horror film as well. If the script seemed tailored for Carpenter, it's because Carpenter's own perceptions of the horror field were to a large extent shaped by Lovecraft. "I first discovered his work as a teenager," Carpenter says, "when someone gave me an anthology of stories called *Great Tales of Horror and the Supernatural*. It had a story by each of the great writers in that field, like M. R. James,

and of course Poe, and it had two stories by H.P. Lovecraft—'Rats in the Walls' and 'The Dunwich Horror.' It was, man, this guy is weird, and of course I sought his other writings. No one's ever really matched his style; I think of how I felt when I read the ending of 'The Outsider,'" when the narrator discovers that the horror that haunts him is his own image in a mirror: *This I have known ever since I stretched out my fingers and touched a cold and unyielding surface of polished glass.*"

In the *Mouth of Madness* addresses Lovecraft's central theme, which developed in his short story work throughout his career. Putting it perhaps too simply, there are ancient and terrible beings, powerful creatures known to man only in dimly remembered legends and forbidden books. Neither alive nor truly dead, these creatures, and their terrible gods, are only half-banished from earth—a banishment that is temporary and fragile, breakable by those who read forbidden books and dabble in ancient arts. And when the stars are right and the banishment ends, the vengeance of Nyarlathotep, of Yog-Sothoth, and of Azathoth will be extracted from the flesh of humanity.

Numerous attempts have been made to bring Lovecraft's vision to the screen, most recently in Stuart Gordon's energetic films *The Re-Animator* and *From Beyond*, which reshape Lovecraft's tales into near-slapstick. They are enjoyable as such, but not Lovecraft. "It's been difficult to get on screen," says Carpenter, "because his stuff is so baroque and so rich. *The Dunwich Hor-*

ror (1967) came kind of close, but none of them ever really got there...."

While Carpenter's film *In the Mouth of Madness* deals appropriately with Lovecraft's concepts, it mixes them with another genre that dates from the 1930s, a hard-boiled private-eye saga—Carpenter calls it, "H.P. Lovecraft meets Raymond Chandler—but being careful not to get too corny with it." To play his gumshoe, Carpenter chose Sam Neill—an actor unique in that he looks comfortable in virtually any role, whether villainous or noble, supporting or starring. "Sam and I met on *Memoirs of an Invisible Man*, and we just hit it off right away," says the director. "The guy has a tremendous sense of humor, which he always manages to use in his roles. It was my luck that when he read the script, he decided that it was wonderfully weird and so he had to do it. He brings a great James Mason-like quality to his role as the ultimate cynic."

One thing that troubled the fans of both Carpenter and Lovecraft was the prolonged delay in the release of *In the Mouth of Madness*, originally scheduled to open last spring. One explanation seems to lie with the film's conclusion, which is self-referential in a similar, though more subtle manner than Wes Craven's *New Nightmare*. Since New Line was the distributor of both films, it seems possible that the studio was, perhaps, playing a strategy game, putting the expensive "brand name" Freddie Krueger first, and allowing the lower-budgeted Carpenter picture to languish.

"I think that is what happened," Carpenter remarks. "But I also think they saw the picture as too idea-driven...too much of a thinking person's picture to be really successful."

Regardless of its level of commercial success, Carpenter is assured an eventful year, supervising post-production on the Universal remake of *Village of the Damned*, and preparing to shoot a long-awaited film, *Escape From L.A.*, which will reunite Carpenter with producer Debra Hill and actor Kurt Russell, close friends from the earliest stage of his career. □



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Films From Under the Floorboards

BY FRANK HENENLOTTER

The director of Basket Case and Frankenhooker unlocks the vaults of the Sci-Fi Channel to present a selection of the most astounding films you'll see nowhere else!



I'M FRUSTRATED. LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHERS, THERE'S NOTHING I like better than watching a good sci-fi horror film. (Of course, there's also nothing I like better than watching a so-called bad sci-fi horror film, but that's another article.) Unfortunately, the Sci-Fi Channel is not offered by Time Warner Cable in Manhattan, so I have no access to the many films in the Sci-Fi Channel library which are not yet available on commercially (and legally) released videotape. And if I had to pick a handful that I'd love to watch again tomorrow, the following would top the list:

The Supernatural (1933; directed by Victor Halperin; with Carole Lombard, Alan Dinehart, Randolph Scott, H.B. Warner, Vivienne Osborne).

H.B. Warner makes a strange request of a prison warden in Victor Halperin's wonderfully hokey *The Supernatural*. He wants to experiment upon the body of condemned strangler ("Men! I hate the whole breed!") Ruth Rogen (Vivienne Osborne). Warner somberly hopes that he "might be able to prevent her personality from escaping after death and committing other crimes." Oddly, Rogen agrees to Warner's request: "If I thought I could come back... If I could use my hands... just for a few minutes!..."

But as she is put to death, "spiritualist" Paul Bavian (Alan Dinehart), Rogen's former lover—the man who betrayed her to the police—is busy setting up a phony seance in order to snare Roma (Carole Lombard) and her millions by claiming he's in touch with her recently deceased brother, John. Using a dozen delightful gimmicks to summon the "ghost" of her brother (and ridding himself of a nosy landlady who threatens blackmail), Bavian's trickery sends Lombard to Warner's penthouse laboratory for advice. Unfortunately, she bursts in just as Warner is applying electrical shocks to Rogen's body, causing the corpse's eyes to open. Warner warns her of the "danger of contagion," as a strange wind blows through the lab and Lombard feels an invisible hand gripping her throat.

It's during Bavian's second fake seance, however, that things really get weird and the spirit of Ruth Rogen literally floats down into Lombard's body. As her makeup subtly changes (a nice lighting trick, à la Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the year before) the good Ms. Lombard (who up until now has been somewhat dull as the virginal Roma), suddenly explodes as the crazed Rogen, immediately seducing the exquisitely slimy Bavian, who hasn't got a clue as to what's happened. After first visiting Rogen's old apartment (where Lombard admires a painting of the sexy Rogen holding an apple, then, seconds later, tries to strangle the landlord), they abscond to her yacht, where they make love and, afterward, she attempts to strangle him. "I am Ruth Rogen!" she says, "And I'm going to kill you before I leave this body you like so much!" (Indeed, before their lovemaking necessitates a fade out, Dinehart actually puts his hand on Lombard's breast in a brief but shocking pre-Code moment.)

Meanwhile, when H.B. Warner realizes that Rogen has possessed Lombard's body, he promptly faints. So it's up to Lombard's boring boyfriend (Randolph Scott) to come

Left: Thanks to a hypnotic trance, sultry Marla English can remember her former lives, including her prehistoric life in her first body. RIGHT: Dull, virginal Carole Lombard is transformed when the spirit of Rogen, a condemned strangler, possesses her.

"SUPERNATURAL"



WITH

CAROLE LOMBARD

RANDOLPH SCOTT

VIVIENNE OSBORNE

H.B. WARNER

*a
Paramount
Picture*

Story by
GARNETT WESTON



**Out of This World
SHOCK SENSATION!**

**ANTHONY DEXTER
SUSAN SHAW
PAUL CARPENTER**

FIRE MAIDENS of OUTER SPACE



SEE

STRANGERS OF ALL RITES
IN THE TEMPLE OF KNOW



SEE

INTERSTELLAR EXPERIENCE
AS YOU RARELY THROUGH
SPACE TO A LOST PLANET



SEE

THE MAIDENS... DEDICATED TO
THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A
NEW RACE OF SUPERMEN

And introducing JACQUELINE CURTIS • Harry Fowler • Sydney Teller • Sydney Dick • Maya Kourami
A Soturn Film Presentation of a Cy Roth Production • Distributed by TOPAZ FILM CO.

explorer Dr. Higgins (Sydney Teller) how long it should take to get to Jupiter's moon, the good doctor uses an old fashioned adding machine (!) to promptly determine that the voyage should take...oooh...three weeks. Armed with "space watches" and a Polaroid camera, Expedition Thirteen's five-man crew zips off to Jupiter (via standard stock shots of rockets), where they encounter "New Atlantis," a tacky, bargain basement palace in which the elderly "lone male survivor" of Atlantis lives with his fourteen young, nubile "daughters," who perform some cheesily choreographed dances to the strains of Borodin's "Third Polovstian Dance," a.k.a "Stranger in Paradise."

And how, exactly, did they get from Atlantis to the thirteenth moon of Jupiter? Beats me. All we're told is that "it had been foreseen and planned long ago." Nevertheless, the old guy is just overjoyed with these Earthmen since he wants them to quickly repopulate New Atlantis after they defeat the Creature, "the Man with the Head of a Beast" who's always lurking nearby. Tall, dark, and pockmarked, the Creature is also described by our intrepid explorers as "a Neanderthal" with "all the characteristics of a cave man." While the Creature doesn't remotely resemble anything Neanderthal, it does growl a lot and try to get within New Atlantis' walls. Just who the Creature really is and how he got there is, of course, unexplained.

Well, in no time at all, Hestia (Susan Shaw), the chief Fire Maiden, falls for Dexter, which somehow irritates the other Fire Maidens to the point that Hestia is promptly tied to an altar for sacrifice; then the Creature shows up, growls a lot, and falls into the fire located directly behind the altar (which may or may not be why the title calls them "Fire Maidens"). Dexter decides he wants to take Hestia back to Earth with him, which disappoints the other Fire Maidens, since they too were "promised husbands."

Yow. There's almost something calm and reassuring about a film that doesn't deal with any kind of reality, emotion, or human behavior. Not once in almost eighty minutes will the viewer be required to think. Forget science, space, or interplanetary exploration. What *Fire Maidens* is really about is ogling girls and some good old-fashioned fifties-style lust. Like when Dexter's drink is drugged and he's knocked out, Hestia plants a nice wet one right on his lips and, hilariously, continues to make out with the unconscious astronaut until the inevitable fade-out. Later, there's a wonderful shot of the Fire Maidens scurrying down a palace corridor with the camera mounted so low to the ground that all we really see of the Maidens are their legs as they rush toward us.

But my favorite moment occurs before the blast off: in one continuous, utterly gratuitous take, a shapely secretary descends the

to her rescue, aided in no small part by yet another disembodied spirit, that of dead brother John....

Just about everyone has seen and loves the Halperin brothers' *White Zombie* but, inexplicably, few have seen this one which, while quite different, is just as good. (You'll notice that Lombard's eyes light up exactly like Lugosi's.) Elegant, stylized, and charming as only the horror films of the early thirties can be.

FIRE MAIDENS OF OUTER SPACE (1956); written and directed by Cy Roth; with Anthony Dexter, Susan Shaw, Paul Carpenter, Jacqueline Curtis).

Personally, the whole concept of exploring outer space bores the hell out of me, unless, of course, I could be assured that there are indeed *Catwomen on the Moon*, beauty contest winners on Venus, and Fire Maidens near Jupiter. That would be different. Until then, I'm satisfied with the *Fire Maidens of Outer Space*, a delightfully brainless space romp that finds a bunch of lovelies, formerly from Atlantis of all foolish places, happily ensconced on the thirteenth moon of Jupiter.

Upon discovery of said moon, the United States and Great Britain quickly whip together a spaceship to explore the strange moon which "looks like the Earth" and, surprise(!), has the same atmosphere. When Commander Anthony Dexter asks fellow

RIGHT: Our boys in space watch helplessly as miniskirted fire maidens participate in a ghastly ritual! 1956's *Fire Maidens of Outer Space*.
BELOW: The dreaded "cotton-ball" monster from 1957's *Unknown Terror*—a *k a the* Soap-suds Movie.

stairs of Dr. Higgins' lab, opens a little metal gate, pulls over a chair, takes some dictation, then returns the chair, reopens the gate, and goes back up the stairs as the camera, like us, stands gawking. (Dr. Higgins: "I wonder if the beings on Jupiter's satellite will look anything like her...." Yuk, yuk.) And what's the first thing these virile astronauts do when they land on this strange new world of feminine pulchritude? That's right. They stretch, smile... and light cigarettes.

THE SHE-CREATURE (1956; DIRECTED BY Edward L. Cahn; with Chester Morris, Marla English, Lance Fuller, Tom Conway, William Hudson).

In 1955, the book *The Search for Bridey Murphy* caused a furor. In it, author Morey Bernstein claimed that, while under hypnosis, a housewife named Ruth Simmons remembered, in graphic detail, her past life as a nineteenth century Irish lass named Bridey. The book was an instant sensation and, for a few months, past life experiences was the hot topic. A number of films capitalized on the book, among them, *I've Lived Before* ('56), *The Undead* ('57), *Fright* ('57), and, the biggest dot of them all, Paramount's *The Search for Bridey Murphy* ('56).

And, of course, *The She-Creature*, which blended hypnotism, spiritualism, reincarnation, and soul transmigration with a good



cast, a pulpy B-movie plot, and a big, lumbering, over-the-top monster.

Chester Morris (with drawn-on sideburns!) plays Dr. Lombardi, whose cheap, sideshow attraction is to put sultry Marla English into a hypnotic trance during which she can remember one of her former lives. In a nice tie-in with the real Bridey Murphy craze, the character played by Marla remembers being one Elizabeth Weatherby and the book Lombardi writes about her, *The Story of Elizabeth Weatherby*, becomes a national best-seller. But, this being a low-budget horror flick for fledgling American International Pictures, AIP, Lombardi can also materialize



one of Ms. English's prehistoric lives, "A creature out of time... huge and indestructible... the transmigration of the soul of a living woman into her first life body!"

To wit, the "She-Creature," a grotesque, hilariously overdone boogie-woman by my favorite movie-monster-maker Paul Blaisdell. With her scaly body, two-toed feet, long reptilian tail, wings on her shoulders and hooks on her tummy, she looks more like some kind of wacky, mutant lobster-woman than a prehistoric female. In fact, she resembles nothing on our evolutionary chain. Which is what I love about her. She's a perversion of nature. A monstrous joke. If a crackpot like the pathologically jealous soapball Lombardi really had the power to materialize such a creature, this would be the result. And with her large, scale-covered breasts, she may very well be the screen's first topless female monster....

One of director Cahn's better efforts (although the ending looks badly rushed), the single most shocking element is the incongruous presence of El Brendel as a butler. El Brendel, you may recall, was the Swedish "dialect comic" who starred in the early sci-fi musical *Just Imagine* ('30), and who later teamed up with Harry Langdon in a series of dreadful comedy shorts in the mid-forties. And here he is, in the middle of a monster movie called *The She-Creature*, suffering from a "nervous adam's apple," which keeps making his bow tie pop off.

UNKNOWN TERROR (1957; DIRECTED BY Charles Marquis Warren; with Mala Powers, John Howard, Paul Richards, Gerald Milton, Sir Lancelot)

Gimpety Pete (Paul Richards) wants to join Dan Mathews' (John Howard) expedition to an unnamed South American jungle where Mala Powers' brother, Jim, disappeared earlier in "the Cave of the Dead." Despite warnings from

maniacal Dr. Ramsey (Gerald Milton), who is obsessed with "fungi, bacteria, and slime molds," and Ms. Powers being menaced by a creature covered with what look like cotton balls, they hear the wailing of the "souls in purgatory" and follow the voices into the mysterious cave where...

Wait... Hold it... Let's cut right to the chase... This is the Soap-suds Movie. Yes, this is the movie that has probably the single lamest menace in the history of the cinema: monster soapsuds.

Now I love dopey monsters. Monsters so stupid and ill-conceived as to be almost awe-inspiring. Like the tree monster in *From Hell It Came* ('57). Or *The Guy With the Head of a Chicken in Blood Freak* ('75). Or *The Giant Claw* ('57). But what we have here is, quite literally, a cave full of soapsuds. And it's hard to get in a lather over a bunch of idiotic bubbles.

Yes, yes, I realize the soapsuds are supposed to be a mutant form of fungus, but that just compounds the problem. At its most basic, a horror film lets us confront the nature and power of fear. And, theoretically, by watching that fear destroyed on screen, we can vicariously come to grips with the same fears inside us. But what we have here is a story that capitalizes on fear of fungus. Forget for a moment that the fungus here is played by soapsuds and just consider the fact that the menace here, the mystery, the deep dark secret of "the Cave of the Dead" is fungus and the film is over before we even see the damn stuff. Fungus?! Fungus?! As in athlete's foot fungus? Or bread mold fungus? I mean, how the hell are we supposed to be afraid of fungus?! Granted, Dr. Ramsey takes pains to point out that it's a very lively fungus: "You can actually see it grow!" But so what? It's still fungus!!!

So, OK, we've already sat through sixty-four minutes of this and have already figured out that the big, bad booga-booga is some

FROM
TIME UNBORN...
A HIDEOUS
SHE-THING!



TERROR FROM THE YEAR 5,000

starring JOYCE HOLDEN • WARD COSTELLO • FREDERIC DOWNS

Produced, Directed and Written by ROBERT J. GURNEY • A JAMES H. HICKSON and SAMUEL Z. AROFF Production • AN AMERICAN-INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

kind of monster fungus and figure that, perhaps, with a little imagination and, hopefully, some talent, the makers of this widescreen ("Regalscope") epic will at least deliver the goods and give us some kind of creepy, never-before-seen monster fungus.

But no. What we get instead are soapsuds. Literally. Plain, ordinary, everyday soapsuds, drooling and bubbling down the sides of the big spooky cave. Soapsuds. Just like you'd find in a sink full of dirty dishes. Monster fungus played by a bunch of soapsuds... Mr. Bubble gone berserk... What more can I say?...

TERROR FROM THE YEAR 5000 (1958; DIRECTED by Robert J. Gurney; with Joyce Holden, Ward Costello, Salome Jens, John Stratton, Frederick Downs).

Dr. Robert Hedges (Ward Costello), a curator at the "Manhattan Museum," gets a statue from Professor Erling (Frederick Downs), an old colleague of his. The statue, a small abstract figure of a female, looks brand new but the note that accompanies it begs Hedges to establish its date of origin. The note also adds, somewhat hysterically, "You have proof that I'm not insane." Subjecting the statue to carbon-14 dating, "the most advanced method known to mankind

for establishing the precise date of origin of archeological artifacts," the statue turns up a minus reading (!), which means the statue "wasn't made until the year 5,200 A.D.!" In other words, the statue "won't exist for another 3,000 years!" But when he discovers that the statue is also radioactive, the paranoid Hedges thinks Erling may have deliberately tried to murder him (huh?), so he heads on down to Erling's lab in central Florida.

There, on an isolated island, Erling and his sullen assistant, Victor (John Stratton), show Hedges a time machine (that looks like an elaborate moonshine still) through which they have been trading objects with beings of the future. To demonstrate, they let Hedges put his Phi Beta Kappa key ring into the machine and it's immediately exchanged for some kind of coin that has the words "Save Us" engraved in Greek.

However, unbeknownst to Erling, Victor has been secretly operating the machine on his own and has already materialized a dead four-eyed cat mutation that he has buried in the lake. He was also grabbed by something that reached out from the machine and sunk its claws into his shoulder, giving him a nasty radiation burn. Nevertheless, he gets good and drunk and activates the machine again, this time releasing some kind of woman that

comes charging out, mewing like a cat. When the others find Victor, he is bloody, barely conscious, and mumbling, "Her face... It's horrible..."

The next day, nurse Salome Jens comes to the island to care for Victor but is confronted by a woman who is hiding in the bushes (and wearing a tight black outfit covered in huge sequins). The woman calls to the nurse in a language Jens doesn't understand, which surprises the woman: "But the letters on the key were in Greek..." Of course the moment Jens gets a good look at the woman's deformed, butt-ugly face, she screams and, as a result, is quickly attacked by the mewing woman, who kills the nurse and instantly creates a mask of her face (leaving the nurse's face eerily blank).

The Terror from 5,200 now disguises herself as the nurse, hypnotizes Victor with her silvery fingernails, and explains: due to the excessive radiation in the air by the year 5000, every fifth child born is a mutant, which the government keeps isolated in freak colonies. So she's here to take Victor back to the future with her and use his "undamaged, pre-atomic" genes to start repopulating the world.

But Erling's daughter, Claire (Joyce Holden), notices the nurse is not wearing

LEFT: Some kind of woman comes charging out of a time machine, wearing a tight black outfit covered in sequins, mewing like a cat in *Terror From the Year 5,000*. RIGHT: Doppelgangers and inexplicable facial blurring hound Kent Taylor and Marie Windsor in *The Day Mars Invaded Earth*.

standard nurse's shoes but, instead, snazzy, futuristic high heels and gets into a brief cat-fight with the nurse during which her rubber face is pulled off. Victor is aghast: "You're one of them! One of those freaks!"...

This is my favorite "time travel" film and easily one of the most enjoyable of the AIP cheapies from the fifties. There's a wonderfully surreal image when Angelo (Fred Herrick), Erling's handyman and part-time peeping tom, encounters the gal from the future who's hiding in some weeds and surrounded by glowing balls of bright, cartoonlike light. It's never explained what the balls of light are (the sun bouncing off the sequins?) nor is the effect seen again but, out of the ten films listed here, it's perhaps the single most striking image. On the other hand, the dumbest moment is undoubtedly when Hedges, Erling, and Claire decide to take in a movie on the mainland. And what do these distinguished scientists go to see? Yup, AIP's *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. Naturally.

THE DAY MARS INVADDED EARTH (1963; DIRECTED by Maury Dexter; with Kent Taylor, Marie Windsor, William Mims, Betty Beall, Gregg Shank).

Contrary to what the title may suggest, this is a quiet, atmospheric, low key B-movie "invasion," in which Kent Taylor and his family are systematically replaced by doubles.

Taylor sends a probe to Mars which burns up six minutes after landing. Almost immediately, his face briefly blurs, he feels dizzy, and when he leaves his office, he's replaced by a double. Reuniting with his family at wife Windsor's palatial estate, Taylor and his family continue to experience the facial blurs and confront duplicates of each other. Finally, after Taylor comes face to face with his other self, the dignified doppelganger calmly explains that he and the other doubles are, in fact, Martians.

Specifically, they are "a manifestation of abstract intelligence...much like electricity..." By replacing Taylor (and, in order to remain unnoticed, his family as well), they hope to prevent further probing of their planet....

Sci-fi films love doubles as a plot device almost as much as they love radiation. But the real kicker of this film, and the reason it's so memorable, is its shocking, startling, and quite logical ending. Rest assured that we shan't give it away here, but the story is resolved in such an abrupt, blunt, and, well, sick way, that it's actually rather rude. The score by Richard LaSalle constantly "bor-

rows" riffs and strains from Bernard Herrman's score for *Vertigo* (appropriately enough). The scene where Betty Beall is awakened in the middle of the night to fight with her double is staged with a surprising special effect: her own real-life twin.

CURSE OF THE FLY (1965; DIRECTED BY Don Sharp; with Brian Donlevy, Carolee Gray, George Baker, Yvette Rees, Michael Graham, Burt Kwouk, Mary Manson).

This is a "forgotten" fly film which, oddly enough, contains no fly. Mental patient Carolee Gray escapes (in bra and panties) from an asylum and is seen running across the road by Martin Delambre (George Baker), who offers her a ride to Montreal. By the time he returns to his family estate in Quebec, the two are already married. This does not go over well with Martin's father, Henri (Brian Donlevy), who is still tinkering with the teleporter developed by his father in *The Fly* ('58). As Donlevy proudly puts it: "The teleporter will replace every known means of transportation." To which his son Albert (Michael Graham) realistically replies: "But it doesn't work!" And Albert's right. Despite Donlevy's optimism, his recent teleportation from Quebec to London and back again has left a mass of thick, lumpy flesh across his back.

In fact, it's very much a case of Ms. Gray jumping from one looney bin to another because the Delambres have three "inmates" hidden away in rooms outside: three misshapen failures of the teleporter who are little more than mindless mutations. Of course the Delambres pretend the mutants don't exist, but Ms. Gray peeks in one of the cells and sees a swollen, disfigured brute grunting and staring back at her. Later she encounters "a woman-thing" playing the piano in the middle of the night who, it turns out, is Michael's first wife, Judith (Mary Manson).

But Michael has bigger problems. Absurdly, (and in direct contradiction to the other films), his and his father's genes have inherited certain characteristics of flies. In particular, Michael and Donlevy suffer from "premature and rapid aging"—since the lifespan of a fly is very brief—which can only be arrested by a special but unnamed serum.

And because the police are again snooping, Donlevy decides to teleport the mutants to London, where brother Albert will have to dispose of them. After the big, burly brute of a mutant briefly gets loose and goes berserk, Michael and Donlevy teleport two of the creatures to London, where they fuse together into one gross, bleeding mass.

Meanwhile, the sinister Oriental housekeeper, Wan lets Judith out of her cell. Poor Judith, who's vertically split between normal and deformed flesh, is also quite crazy and quickly attacks Wan, Ms. Gray, the teleporter, and lab assistant Burt Kwouk before Kwouk kills her.

Fearing that the police will arrive any minute, Donlevy hops into the teleporter en route to London, not realizing that son Albert has destroyed the reinterator, and his molecules are presumably lost in space. But Michael doesn't know that and is about to teleport the reluctant Ms. Gray, when he suddenly starts to age....

Obviously, anyone expecting a "Fly" movie will probably be disappointed since this is more of a mutant movie, along the lines of *The Unearthly* ('57). The "Fly" actually does make a three-second cameo of sorts when Inspector Charas (Charles Carson) shows a detective an 8" x 10" glossy photo of the creature from *Return of the Fly* ('59) and comments that it was the beginning of "the curse of the Delambres..." *Curse of the Fly*, you might say. "Which is, after all, a far more exploitable title than *Curse of the Teleporter That Still Doesn't Work*. □



James Herbert Is No

FLUKE

BY CURT WELLS

One of Britain's most enduring writers finally sees his work given the proper big-screen treatment.

IN THE 1960S, WHEN JAMES HERBERT was a young man working his way through art school, he fancied himself a musician; like many others of that age, he got together with several fellow students to form a band. "I used to play gigs at parties and at school," he recalls. "But I remember one week after I played at art college a new band came onto the scene and they were pretty good—they made me look pretty sick. They were called the Rolling Stones...and after that I quieted down a bit on music."

What was lost to the world of music was gained in the world of letters; scuttling his plans for rock stardom, Herbert turned instead to the world of fantasy and horror, applying his fertile imagination to such diverse works as *The Magic Cottage*, *The Dark*, *Creed*, *The Fog* and *Sepulchre*.

"It's a peculiar thing over here [in England], because I think I'm...not exactly ostracized; but viewed more in a very odd way and one of the things is, I'm too successful over here," says Herbert. "I have had too many number one bestsellers, and they see me as a bit of an upstart because I came along with horror. Our literati over here is very elitist and I'm not very popular with them."

Nevertheless, Herbert has continued to sustain his popularity as a novelist in Britain, even without the endlessly hyped "media crossovers" that many of his peers, such as Stephen King, Dean Koontz and Clive Barker, have seen blossom from their written works.

"My agent said to me years ago, 'you're a writer, you write books, and anything else is a bonus. Films based on your books are just

a bonus. If they happen that's great. If they don't happen, you're still a writer.' And that's the philosophy I believe."

The film world is opening up a bit for Herbert, however, with two films due out this year. MGM's fantasy comedy *Fluke* stars Matthew Modine, Eric Stoltz, and Nancy Travis, and tells the story of a dog that realizes he was once a man and must find his way home. In a more serious vein, *Haunted*, a British production, stars Aidan Quinn as a ghost chaser.

"I'm very choosy about the books I sell," explains Herbert, who had a particularly disastrous experience earlier on in his career when his popular debut novel *The Rats* was massacred when brought to the screen as *Deadly Eyes*, as was *The Survivor*. Both were released in the early '80s.

"Both films were so far from the books themselves that I had no say in them and both of them were real trash," he admits. "In *The Survivor*, Robert Powell gave a very good performance, but the film was cut from two hours to ninety minutes and suffered from that. In fact when I saw that movie in Australia when I was on tour, I fell asleep in the cinema. I really didn't understand the story. So those films were bad experiences and after that, I was very choosy as to who I gave a book to."

Fluke's director, Carlo Carlei (*Flight of the Innocent*), was a film student in 1984 when he first contacted Herbert about optioning the rights to the novel. Because of its light fantasy elements, *Fluke* is an unusual example

The film's Fluke, at right with his canine buddy Rumbo, and the human cast of Fluke (clockwise from rear left Eric Stoltz, Matthew Modine, Nancy Travis, and Max Pomerantz).



Photo: Peter Iovino/©1994 Metro Goldwyn Mayer Inc

of Herbert's work—but not at all the sort of wholesome dog movie that Disney, *Benji* and *Oh Heavenly Dog* might lead one to expect. The story concerns a street smart mutt named Fluke, who becomes top dog when he discovers his ability to communicate with other animals telepathically—not to mention his thorough understanding of human speech. The story's dark side stems from Fluke's tortured memories—memories he

can't be sure are real—of life as a man.

"Carlo was so obsessed with the story, I knew he could do something good with it. It's a very hard movie to bring off, being a movie about a dog; and at the time we didn't have the technology that we have now. But I had no worries with Carlo and I let him have the rights for a long time. I knew his intent was good."

Like many big-screen adaptations, a few story elements were modified. The original script Carlei wrote with James Carrington was initially set in England, but since Carlo was unfamiliar with the region, Herbert felt some technical details were a bit wrong. "But the story was very close to the book, which was very pleasing to me," he notes. When financing was secured through the U.S., the location, rather predictably, was changed to America and was again rewritten. Much to Herbert's surprise, the shooting script remained faithful to the source.

During production, the author returned from his visit to the set in Atlanta satisfied that things were in the proper hands. "I think Carlo, sort of obsessed by the book, didn't want to stray too far from the content, so I knew he would be pretty faithful to it. I thought the movie was going to be impossible to do, because it's getting into a dog's mind and how do you do that on screen? But he's done it in a clever way, with animatronics and the use of very, very good dog actors. And some of the shots I saw, without special effects, were really great."

With *Fluke* in safe hands, Herbert felt safe in entrusting another of his favorite novels to dramatic treatment. The film version of *Haunted* was initiated when Herbert was approached by the BBC to try his hand at adapting his 1989 novel for television.

"They liked the script so much they wanted to turn it into a two-hour film for Christmas and a thirteen-part series after that, but some political things happened at the BBC and the guy in charge was promoted and a new guy came in who apparently didn't like horror—so the project floundered."

Soon after, actor-turned-producer Anthony Andrews expressed interest in the rights to *Haunted*. Andrews put together a deal with Francis Ford Coppola aboard as an executive producer and respected veteran British director Lewis Gilbert as director. Herbert once again felt that his material would be in good hands.

"Basically it's the story of a man who is a ghost hunter [Aidan Quinn], and a parapsychologist [Sir John Gielgud] invites him to an old country house to investigate the hauntings there. When you have a good cast like this, it gives you confidence that they're going to do something with it. I've been a bit wary of film

Continued on page 72



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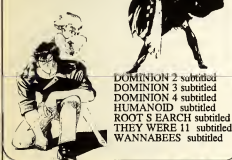
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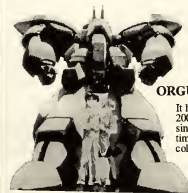
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The controversial film *A Clockwork Orange* can still jolt us.

STEVEN PUCHALSKI & EMRU TOWNSHEND

MALCOLM MCDOWELL HAS BEEN making the rounds of late, promoting *Star Trek: Generations* and his role as Dr. Soran, as well as his forthcoming role as the principal villain in *Tank Girl*. Though effective in those parts (and looking more like Sting's older brother), younger moviegoers might not be aware of some of his earlier excursions into celluloid science fiction.

McDowell may be better remembered for his '70s work, such as *Time After Time*, in which his time-traveling H.G. Wells chases Jack the Ripper to present-day San Francisco. More important is his trilogy of fantastic-edged dramas for the late Lindsay Anderson, *If...*, *O*

divided, and can illicit an emotional response in even the most jaded viewer.

Based on Anthony Burgess' novel, the story is simple enough, taking the popular juvenile delinquent tales of the time and transposing them to the near future. Malcolm McDowell stars as Alex, a young man living in an England where street gangs blithely prey on the weak, and despite an Orwellian veneer of conformity, lawlessness seems a way of life. Still living with his parents, Alex and his trio of Droogs head out at night for a night of "ultra-violence" and a little of the old "in-out, in-out." They begin their escapades by beating a homeless old drunk senseless, then thrashing a competing gang to a pulp, after which they break into a suburban home, tie up the husband (Patrick Magee), and make him witness his wife's rape.

Kubrick knows how to twist your emotions in unexpected directions. Because even though Alex and his Droogs are a scummy bunch of idiots, Kubrick films their anti-social activities with such grace and style that you can't help but be pulled in by the sheer artistry at work. The camera frames each act of violence with such beauty, that instead of flinching, we're drawn into their world of crime and random destruction.

Their matter-of-fact spree of terrorism culminates with the death of one of their victims, a middle-aged woman, and McDowell ends up in prison for murder. In order to commute his sentence, he volunteers for the experimental Ludovico Technique—a treatment of drug injections and repeated viewings of graphic violence—which conditions Alex to become violently ill every time he has an antisocial thought.

But when Alex is tossed back into society, we realize that without this freedom of choice, he's barely human. He is unable to fight back against a common bully without becoming sick, touch a woman without retching, or (worst of all) enjoy the music of Ludwig Van Beethoven. The final segment takes Alex on a tour through past debaucheries, which allows everyone he's ever tormented to dump on the guy. His parents have rented out his room, his old Droogs are now employed as police, and even the homeless guy they kicked the crap out of in the intro gets a whack at him.

The point? That even in the most evil individual, the freedom of moral choice is essential. Sure, Alex is nothing but your standard punk—but the government's



This issue's favored star, Malcolm McDowell, in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. How many times can you spot McDowell in these pages?

Lucky Man! and *Britannia Hospital*, in which McDowell grows from a rebellious youth, to enterprising Candide, to a patchwork medical experiment.

But the one film that firmly entrenched McDowell into our collective psyche was his dazzling star turn in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Deified by both critics and the public for his thought-provoking vision of the future in 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, Kubrick's science fiction followup, *A Clockwork Orange*, was a little too close to home for many viewers. And nearly a quarter of a century later, this futuristic tale of youth gone wrong and the importance of free will still flattens us like a jolt of electroshock.

With the star of this film back in the media spotlight, this seems like the perfect time to look back at this prophetic knockout. It's a film that, nearly a quarter century after its initial release, still has people violently

MARK DWANE

MUSIC OUT OF THIS WORLD



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chilling vision of transforming undesirables into "clockwork oranges" (human on the outside, but a mechanism inside), instead turns this "vicious young hoodlum" into a social martyr, as well as an extreme example of the absolute need for free will.

As a concrete vision of the future, this film is hard to beat. This is a meticulously crafted, pop art fantasia, from the disturbingly trendy set design and the outlandish fashions, to the hyper-color end credits, which will give eyestrain to anyone sitting through them. Viewing it nowadays, you realize how truly visionary Kubrick and Burgess were in their observations, right down to the present-day juvenile gangs and the day-to-day violence that pockmarks the nightly news.

Even if you don't agree that this is a great film, it is, without question, an unsettling one (especially for women, due to its decidedly misogynistic tone). Within Alex we witness the inherent viciousness of mankind, while Kubrick turns it all into a ruthless comic book of excess, complete with sequences that sear their way into cinematic history. Who will be able to listen to Gene Kelly's "Singing in the Rain" again without remembering McDowell kicking the bejesus out of Patrick Magee as he warbles that tune? Or the image of McDowell strapped to his theater seat, his eyes pried open, his head a mass of wires and electrodes, forced to view endless scenes of antisocial behavior?

Much of the film's appeal is due to McDowell's natural charisma, complete with a bad-boy smirk that made his character an instant antihero legend. He's a killer, a wiseass, a Dennis the Menace gone awry, with a gleam in his eye that'll sweeten even the most cynical heart, even as he's stabbing you in the back. And with his bowler hat, one set of false eyelashes, and white cod-piece, Alex became a precursor of every punk aesthetic to emerge from the late '70s. In fact, nowadays he's such a universal symbol for socially accepted rebellion that even TV's Bart Simpson character dressed up like Alex for a Halloween episode.

All this said and done, it's easy to see why *A Clockwork Orange* is still one of the most controversial films ever made. Its power is undiminished, and it remains a topic of heated debate even now. Like it or not, it's difficult to find a SF film so literate and demanding on the part of the viewer, especially when present-day filmmakers are more inclined to indulge in empty-headed special effects than a simple script rewrite. And with this stunning vision, Kubrick proved once and for all that, despite its detractors, the science fiction genre had—and still has—the ability to stir the imagination and tear a ragged hole in your preconceived world.

Tired of renting a film from your local video store's science fiction bin, only to discover yet another chunk of mindless American pablum? Well, take a turn into the foreign film section next time and try out the

Russian-made *Solaris* (Fox Lorber Video), a rare example of the thinking man's/woman's science fiction from the labyrinthine genius of the late Andrei Tarkovsky. Though not as hypnotic and maddening as his later *Stalker* (imagine 2001 as rewritten by Samuel Beckett), both films capture a texture for nature and complexity of themes rarely attempted in modern-day celluloid sci-fi.

Based on Stanislaw Lem's celebrated novel, the story involves a psychologist named Kelvin, who's assigned to check on some funny business at a space station circling *Solaris*—a mysterious planet comprised of a swirling ocean of fog and matter. He arrives to discover the living quarters are nasty, grimy and unkempt; the pair of remaining residents are half-nuts and unusually secretive; and the corridors echo with foreboding (not to mention dirty laundry). All the characters remain solemn and passive throughout (typical for Russian cinema), even as absurd, unexplainable occurrences transpire, such as some mysterious new additions to the ship's population. Soon Kelvin himself is pulled into the station's spell, and he must contend with the sudden appearance of his deceased wife, while trying to unravel who—or what—is causing these "guests" to form from the crew's subconscious desires.

This is a dense tale, as visionary as it is enigmatic, and though the special effects aren't going to give Industrial Light and Magic any worries, they're effective in a highly stylized way. But what makes it truly different is that instead of relying on cold technology and gimmicks, Tarkovsky builds his foundation on the all-too-human conditions of Loss and Longing. Who hasn't dreamt of reliving the past? Or seeing the person we once loved one final time? Heavy themes to be found in a sci-fi flick, and though Tarkovsky is never subtle in his intentions, the entire enterprise is forged in personal pain.

Be prepared to slow down your rhythms a bit though. Several long, pretentious sequences may tax your patience (such as a tour along an urban highway, symbolizing Kelvin's journey through space), but there's beauty to be found in every shot. And at nearly three hours long, this epic-length tale is certain to infuriate short-attention-span viewers, even as it dazzles those with an eye toward the more intellectually courageous. Though not for all tastes, *Solaris* is an uncompromising masterpiece of despair and romance, poured within the trappings of traditional science fiction.

Scratch *Robotech's* (Family Home Entertainment, 1993) surface and you get nothing exceptional: transformable giant robots, cool battle scenes, and imposing aliens. But look a little closer, and you'll see there's more: enough, in fact, that after this cartoon hit North American airwaves in 1985, it spawned several comic books, a role-playing

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game, a series of novels, and an ill-fated movie and TV series. Some say it even sparked the current boom in Japanese animation (*anime*) in the West.

Robotech was not originally a single series from Japan; rather, it was a combination of three unrelated *anime* series, stitched together and redubbed by Harmony Gold. The three series became three different wars affecting three generations, for a total of eighty-five episodes. Script editor Carl Macek has taken a lot of heat from hardcore *anime* enthusiasts for this, but in some ways the final product became more than the sum of its parts. Rather than being the story of how invading aliens are defeated by humans, *Robotech* reached epic proportions, becoming a story where Earth is inextricably woven into an interplanetary war between three equally weird and fearsome races.

But the show's main strength was in its maturity. Many people consider a cartoon as "adult" or "mature" when there's a certain level of violence, swearing, or sexual situations. While *Robotech* had plenty of violence—it was a war cartoon, after all—it was not gory or gratuitous, and it lacked the other two features altogether. What made the show mature was how it handled certain issues such as bigotry, interracial relationships, sacrificing lives for political expediency, genocide, propaganda, the dehumanization of one's enemies, and so on.

And death was handled with equal maturity; it was never denied that war may sometimes be necessary, though the series frequently affirmed that it's rarely a good thing. In one episode, two characters look over a battered landscape. One opines, "This is such a brutal war." "Yeah," interjects the other, "but can you tell me of a war that isn't?" Given the various situations throughout the series—humankind as defenders, as a near-extinct species, as oppressed people—*Robotech* had plenty of opportunities to look at how people react to death during war.

The show had three failings: the animation was inconsistent from episode to episode, the voice acting was occasionally outright hokey, and there were some noticeable plot holes and inconsistencies. The first is hardly uncommon to television animation, and the last two are probably the result of *Robotech*'s rushed production schedule. In any case, the characterizations and overall storyline works well enough that these can be forgiven.

Caveat: This isn't the first time Family Home Entertainment has released *Robotech*; shortly after the series first premiered, they released the first three episodes of the series, one episode per tape. Later, they released the first thirty-six episodes, cramming six episodes onto each tape by editing out about twenty minutes from each tape. This latest release has no cut footage and two episodes per tape, presumably because they intend to release the whole series. Be sure to check the box to see which release it is before picking it up. □

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CHANNEL NEWS

Continued from page 10

ground, a depiction of the star in his most famous role. More than 7,000 letters in support of this effort have already been received. If you agree that these frightening forefathers' famous faces are as deserving of a special stamp as Elvis or Marilyn, please send a letter which includes the sentence "I support the petition for a 'Legends of Horror' stamp set series honoring Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney, and Bela Lugosi" to Sarah Karloff, P.O. Box 2424, Rancho Mirage, California, 92270. She will bundle the responses and forward them to the U.S. Postmaster.

Getting the Sci-Fi Channel On your cable system

As mentioned in the last issue of *Sci-Fi Entertainment*, many readers continue to write and call to express frustration because they do not have the Sci-Fi Channel on their local cable system. Here are some suggestions about what can be done to help encourage cable companies to add the Sci-Fi Channel to your life:

1. **CALL, WRITE OR FAX** the general manager of your cable company and request that the Sci-Fi Channel be added to your system's lineup. You may want to send a copy of the letter to your city councilperson or city cable administrator.

2. **START A PETITION.** Get as many signatures as possible from people who want the Sci-Fi Channel on your cable system. Deliver the petition to your cable company.

3. **START A CALL-IN CAMPAIGN** with your neighbors to your cable company's Director of Marketing.

4. **WRITE** an editorial and submit it to your local newspapers.

5. **CALL** local radio station talk show hosts. We hope this helps bring the Sci-Fi Channel to your cable universe!

Sci-Fi Channel on-line

For up-to-the-minute Sci-Fi Channel program information and multimedia interactivity, check out these on-line services!

America Online
Go to "keyword" and type "SciFi Channel" or go to "television" in the "Games and Entertainment" department and click on "Networks," then on "Sci-Fi Channel" or Go to "Lifestyles & Interests," then click on "Science Fiction and Fantasy," then on "Sci-Fi Channel." The Sci-Fi Channel representative is "Max SFC." To become a member of America Online, call 1-800-340-3800.

Prodigy
Jump to "Sci-Fi Channel" or Go to "Television" in the "Entertainment" department, then click on "Networks Online" and then on "Sci-Fi Channel." The Sci-Fi Channel rep is "Max Lansing" at "USA004A." To become a member of Prodigy, call 1-800-PRODIGN, ext. USA. □



MARCH • APRIL PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Informational	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00	Cartoon Quest		
7:30			
8:00			
8:30			
9:00	The Powers of Matthew Star/ Time Tunnel	Cartoon Quest	Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30			Mysteries/Magic/Miracles
10:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Inside Space
10:30			The Science Show ³
11:00	Dark Shadows	Land of the Giants	Sci-Fi Trader
11:30	Dark Shadows / Fri: Sci-Fi Trader		One Step Beyond
Noon	Beauty and the Beast	Swamp Thing	Galactica 1980
12:30		Swamp Thing	
1:00	Alfred Hitchcock Presents	Space 1999	Voyage to the Bottom of Sea
1:30	Beyond Reality		
2:00	Night Gallery	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Ray Bradbury Theater		
3:00	The Invaders ¹		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Voyagers / Misfits of Science	Radiation Theater	
4:30			Radiation Theater
5:00	The Bionic Woman		
5:30			
6:00	The Six Million Dollar Man	My Secret Identity	
6:30		My Secret Identity	Sci-Fi Trader

EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
7:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
8:00	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
8:30						Film	Amazing Stories
9:00	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie		Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30							Mysteries/Magic
10:00	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
10:30							Science Show ³

LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
11:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
Midnite	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
12:30						Film	Amazing Stories
1:00	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie		Sci-Fi Buzz
1:30							Mysteries/Magic
2:00	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	Friday 13th:Series	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
2:30							Science Show ³
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater ²	Suspense Theater ²	Radiation Theater	Sci-Fi Trader
3:30							Informational

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change. This schedule is effective March and April 1995.

¹ Ripley's Believe It or Not (effective week of 3/27/95);

² Retro TV (effective week of 3/27/95);

³ C-Net Central (effective week of 3/27/95)

George Alec Effinger
Harlan Ellison ★ **Bio Trimble**
Michael Whelan ★ **Timothy Zahn**

Ben Bova ★ Peter David ★ Leslie Fish ★ Brian
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FRIDAY, 3/3

7:30 p.m. Masters of Fantasy
 1:30 p.m. Masters of Fantasy

SATURDAY, 3/4

2:00 p.m. Short Circuit
 1986, Comedy, Steve
 Guttenberg, Ally Sheedy
 4:00 p.m. The Lightning
 Incident, 1991, Suspense,
 Nancy McKeon, Polly Bergen
 6:00 p.m. Masters of Fantasy
 7:00 p.m. Last Episode/ Cliff-
 hanger Playhouse, *Invaders*,
Time Tunnel, *The New Dark*
Shadows, *Alien Nation*
 11:00 p.m. Last Episode/
 Cliffhanger Playhouse
 3:00 a.m. Adventures of
 Buckaroo Banzai
 1984, Comedy, Ellen Barkin

SUNDAY, 3/5

3:00 p.m. Last Episode/ Cliff-
 hanger Playhouse, *Invaders*,
Time Tunnel, *The New Dark*
Shadows, *Alien Nation*
 8:30 p.m. Masters of Fantasy
 12:30 a.m. Masters of Fantasy

MONDAY, 3/6

1:00 p.m. Masters of Fantasy
 7:30 p.m. Masters of Fantasy
 11:30 p.m. Masters of Fantasy

TUESDAY, 3/7

2:00 p.m. Dr. Cyclops
 1940, Horror, Albert Dekker
 3:30 p.m. Lady in White
 1988, Suspense, Lucas Haas
 2:00 a.m. Masters of Fantasy
 3:00 a.m. The Land Unknown
 1957, Science Fiction

WEDNESDAY, 3/8

3:00 p.m. The Terrormauts

MARCH MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

FRIDAY, 3/3

4:30 p.m. Soul Taker
 1990, Joe Estevez

FRIDAY, 3/17

9:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 1995, Documentary
 1:00 a.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman

SATURDAY, 3/18

2:00 p.m. The Incredible
 Shrinking Man
 1957, Science Fiction
 4:00 p.m. Soul Taker
 1990, Joe Estevez
 8:00 p.m. Not of This World
 1991, Science Fiction
 10:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 1995, Documentary
 12:00 a.m. Not of This World
 1991, Science Fiction
 2:00 a.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 3:00 a.m. Stowaway to the
 Moon, 1975, Science Fiction,
 Lloyd Bridges, Michael Link

SUNDAY, 3/19

3:00 p.m. Transformations
 1988, Science Fiction
 4:30 p.m. Bad Channels
 1992, Science Fiction

MONDAY 3/20

9:00 p.m. Phantom Planet
 1961, Science Fiction
 1:00 a.m. Phantom Planet

TUESDAY, 3/21

9:00 p.m. Phantom From
 Space, 1953, Science Fiction
 1:00 a.m. Phantom From
 Space

WEDNESDAY 3/22

9:00 p.m. Phantom Ship
 1935, Horror, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 a.m. Phantom Ship

THURSDAY, 3/23

9:00 p.m. Phantom of the
 Opera, 1925, Horror, Lon
 Chaney, Sr.
 1:00 a.m. Phantom of the
 Opera, 1925, Horror

FRIDAY, 3/24

9:00 p.m. Phantom of the
 Opera, 1962, Horror, Herbert
 Lom
 1:00 a.m. Phantom of the
 Opera, 1962, Horror

SATURDAY, 3/25

1:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 1995, Documentary
 2:00 p.m. The Day the World
 Ended, 1956, Science Fiction
 4:00 p.m. Circuity Man
 1956, Science Fiction
 8:00 p.m. Shocker
 1989, Horror
 12:00 a.m. Shocker
 3:00 a.m. It Came From
 Outer Space
 1953, Science Fiction

SUNDAY 3/26

2:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 1995, Documentary
 3:00 p.m. The Undead
 1956, Horror, Pamela Duncan
 6:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman
 9:00 p.m. Cult Classics of
 Roger Corman

APRIL MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 4/1

8:00 p.m. Invasion of the
 Body Snatchers
 1956, Science Fiction, Kevin
 McCarthy, Dana Winter
 12:00 a.m. Invasion of the
 Body Snatchers
 2:00 a.m. The Brain
 1965, Peter Van Eyck

SUNDAY, 4/2

3:00 p.m. Fantastic Planet
 1973, Animated
 4:30 p.m. Not of This World
 1991, Science Fiction

SATURDAY, 4/8

11:00 a.m. Gamera (The
 Invincible), 1965, Science
 Fiction, Eiji Funakoshi,
 1:00 p.m. Gamera vs.
 Barugon, 1966, Science
 Fiction, Kojiro Hongo
 3:00 p.m. Gamera vs. Gao
 1967, Science Fiction
 5:00 p.m. Gamera vs. Guiron
 1969, Science Fiction

7:00 p.m. Gamera vs. Ziga

1971, Science Fiction
 9:00 p.m. King Kong vs.
 Godzilla, 1963, Science
 Fiction, Michael Keith
 11:00 p.m. Godzilla on
 Monster Island
 Science Fiction
 1:00 a.m. Godzilla vs.
 Megalon, Science Fiction
 3:00 a.m. Godzilla vs. The
 Cosmic Monster
 Science Fiction

SUNDAY, 4/9

9:00 a.m. Murders in the Rue
 Morgue, 1932, Horror
 10:30 a.m. Killdozer
 1974, Science Fiction
 12:00 p.m. The Raven
 1935, Horror, Boris Karloff
 1:30 p.m. It Came From
 Outer Space
 1953, Science Fiction, Richard
 Carlson, Barbara Rush
 3:30 p.m. Things to Come
 1936, Science Fiction

5:30 p.m. Fahrenheit 451

1967, Science Fiction, Julie
 Christie, Oskar Werner
 8:00 p.m. Dracula
 1931, Horror, Bela Lugosi
 9:30 p.m. Frankenstein
 1931, Horror, Boris Karloff
 11:00 p.m. Rosemary's Baby
 1968, Horror, Mia Farrow
 2:00 a.m. The Lost World
 1925, Science Fiction

MONDAY, 4/10

9:00 a.m. The Bride of
 Frankenstein
 1935, Horror, Boris Karloff
 10:30 a.m. The Brides of
 Dracula
 1960, Horror, Peter Cushing
 12:30 p.m. Creature from the
 Black Lagoon
 1954, Horror, Richard Carlson
 2:30 p.m. Revenge of the
 Creature, 1955, Horror
 4:30 p.m. The Creature
 Walks Among Us
 1956, Horror, Jeff Morrow

APRIL MOVIES

ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

6:30 p.m. Tarantula
1955, Science Fiction
8:30 p.m. The Deadly Mantis
1957, Science Fiction
10:30 p.m. The Evil of
Frankenstein
1964, Horror, Peter Cushing
12:30 a.m. The Monolith
Monsters, 1957, Science
Fiction, Lola Albright

TUESDAY, 4/11
9:00 a.m. Frankenstein's
Daughter, 1959, Horror
11:00 a.m. Dracula's
Daughter, 1936, Horror
12:30 p.m. Son of
Frankenstein,
1939, Horror, Boris Karloff
2:30 p.m. Son of Dracula
1943, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.
4:30 p.m. Firestarter
1984, Horror, George C. Scott
6:30 p.m. Child of Darkness,
Child of Light
1991, Suspense
8:30 p.m. Child's Play 2
1990, Horror, Alex Vincent
10:30 p.m. Psycho 2, 1983,
Suspense, Anthony Perkins
1:01 a.m. Psycho 3, 1986,
Suspense, Anthony Perkins

WEDNESDAY, 4/12
9:00 a.m. Zombies of the
Stratosphere, 1958, Science
Fiction, Leonard Nimoy
11:00 a.m. Retik, the Moon
Menace, 1951, Science Fiction
1:00 p.m. The Crimson
Ghost, 1946, Science Fiction,
Clayton Moore
3:00 p.m. D-Day on Mars
1945, Science Fiction, Dennis
Moore, Linda Sterling
5:00 p.m. Fire Maidens of
Outer Space, 1956, Science
Fiction, Anthony Dexter
7:00 p.m. The Claw
Monsters, 1954, Science
Fiction, Phyllis Coates
9:00 p.m. The Unknown
Terror, 1957, Science Fiction,
John Howard, May Wynn
11:00 p.m. The Maze
1953, Horror, Richard Carlson
1:00 a.m. The Lady and the
Monster, 1944, Horror, Eric
Von Stroheim, Vera Ralston

THURSDAY, 4/13
9:00 a.m. The Mummy
1932, Horror, Boris Karloff
10:30 a.m. The Mummy's
Hand, 1940, Horror
12:00 p.m. The Mummy's
Tomb, 1942, Horror, Lon
Chaney, Jr.
1:30 p.m. The Mummy's
Ghost, 1943, Horror, Lon
Chaney, Jr.
3:00 p.m. The Mummy's
Curse, 1944, Horror, Lon
Chaney, Jr.
4:30 p.m. Curse of the
Undead, 1959, Horror
6:30 p.m. Curse of the

Voodoo, 1965, Horror
8:30 p.m. Curse of the Living
Corpse, 1964, Horror
10:30 p.m. Curse of the
Werewolf, 1961, Horror
12:30 a.m. The Black Cat
1934, Horror, Boris Karloff
2:00 a.m. The Black Cat
1990, Horror

FRIDAY, 4/14
9:00 a.m. Tobor the Great
1954, Science Fiction
10:30 a.m. The Colossus of
New York, 1958, Science
Fiction, John Baragrey
12:00 p.m. Cyborg 2087
1967, Science Fiction
2:00 p.m. Kronos
1957, Science Fiction, Jeff
Morrow, Barbara Lawrence
4:00 p.m. Colossus: The
Forbin Project
1970, Science Fiction
6:00 p.m. Android
1983, Science Fiction, Klaus
Kinski, Kendra Kirchner
8:00 p.m. Homewrecker
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson
10:00 p.m. Short Circuit
1986, Comedy, Ally Sheedy
12:00 a.m. Crash and Burn
1990, Science Fiction
2:00 a.m. Overdrawn at the
Memory Bank
Science Fiction, Raul Julia

SATURDAY, 4/15
11:00 a.m. Fiend Without a
Face, 1959, Science Fiction,
Marshall Thompson
1:00 p.m. The Thing That
Couldn't Die
1958, Horror, Andra Martin
2:30 p.m. The Brain Eaters
1958, Science Fiction, Edwin
Nelson, Alan Frost
4:00 a.m. Creature With the
Atom Brain
1955, Science Fiction, Richard
Denning, Angela Stevens
5:30 p.m. Scanners
1981, Science Fiction, Jennifer
O'Neill, Patrick McGowan
8:00 p.m. Return of the
Living Dead
1985, Horror, Clu Gulager
10:00 p.m. Night of the
Living Dead
1968, Horror, Judith O'Dea
12:00 a.m. The Evil Dead
1985, Horror, Bruce Campbell
2:00 a.m. Carnival of Souls
1962, Fantasy, Candace
Hilligoss, Sidney Berger

SUNDAY, 4/16
9:00 a.m. Forbidden Planet
1956, Science Fiction, Walter
Pidgeon, Anne Francis
11:00 a.m. Dune
1984, Science Fiction, Kyle
MacLachlan, Sting
2:00 p.m. The Princess Bride
1987, Fantasy, Cary Elwes
4:00 p.m. Tremors
1990, Horror, Kevin Bacon

6:00 p.m. Back to the Future,
Part 2, 1989, Adventure,
Michael J. Fox
8:30 p.m. Alien Nation
1988, Science Fiction, James
Caan, Mandy Patinkin
10:30 p.m. Darkman
1990, Action, Liam Neeson
12:30 a.m. Forbidden Planet
1956, Science Fiction, Walter
Pidgeon, Anne Francis

SATURDAY, 4/22
2:00 p.m. The Navigator: A
Medieval Odyssey
1988, Fantasy, Bruce Lyons
4:00 p.m. Biggles:
Adventures in Time
1985, Fantasy, Neil Dickson
8:00 p.m. Planetary
Premiere: New Eden
1994, Science Fiction, Stephen
Baldwin, Lisa Bonet
12:00 a.m. Planetary
Premiere: New Eden
3:00 a.m. Metalstorm: The
Destruction of Jared-Syn
1983, Science Fiction

SUNDAY, 4/23
3:00 p.m. The Wolfman
1941, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr.
4:30 p.m. Planetary
Premiere: New Eden
1994, Science Fiction, Stephen
Baldwin, Lisa Bonet

SATURDAY, 4/29
2:00 p.m. Android
1983, Science Fiction, Klaus
Kinski, Kendra Kirchner
4:00 p.m. Planetary
Premiere: New Eden
1994, Science Fiction, Stephen
Baldwin, Lisa Bonet
7:00 p.m. Star Trek: The
Motion Picture
1979, Science Fiction, William
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy
10:30 p.m. Star Trek 5: The
Final Frontier
1989, Science Fiction, William
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy
1:00 a.m. Leonard Nimoy's
Trek Memories
Documentary
2:00 a.m. Star Trek's 25th
Anniversary Special
Documentary
3:30 a.m. Missile Monsters
1958, Science Fiction, Walter
Reed, Lois Collier

SUNDAY, 4/30
10:00 a.m. Leonard Nimoy's
Trek Memories
Documentary
11:00 a.m. Star Trek's 25th
Anniversary Special
Documentary
12:30 p.m. Star Trek: The
Motion Picture
1979, Science Fiction, William
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy
4:00 p.m. Star Trek 5: The
Final Frontier
1989, Science Fiction, William
Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

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A book as thick as a cinderblock yields a treasure trove of movie lore.

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

THOUGH IT BOGGLES THE MIND, there are certain people out there—perfectly intelligent people, maybe even in your own family—who can sit and watch a movie, and actually enjoy it, without knowing the names of the actors. Incredible! And what's more, they don't even seem to care! They don't chuckle with recognition when

Dick Miller and Jackie Joseph, from *The Little Shop of Horrors*, appear as a small-town couple

in *Gremlins*, or when Kenneth Tobey, who saved mankind in *The Thing*, stalks through *Strange Invaders* as an alien spy, or when *Thing* alumnus Robert Cornthwaite, the quintessential egghead, plays a similar role in *Matinee*. They don't even smile when gaunt and gothic

favorite genre there's Bill Warren's *Keep Watching the Skies!* (McFarland, 910-246-4460), a lovingly detailed—and often hilarious—two-volume study of science fiction films from 1950 to 1962. At more than 1300 pages, it's actually worth the whopping \$85 price.

While the above three titles focus on individual movies, *The Film Encyclopedia* (HarperCollins, \$25 paperback) focuses on people—thousands of them: actors, directors, and the more important writers and producers, from straight-man Bud Abbott to director Edward Zwick (*Glory*), all of them profiled in highly readable mini-bios, ranging from a few lines to full-scale essays, complete with extensive filmographies. A mammoth 1500-pager as thick and heavy as a Manhattan phone book, it's also crammed with information—perhaps too much—on optics, special effects, and other technical matters, along with articles on the film industry in such exotic climes as Egypt, Iran, and Venezuela.

While the technical material is dull, the biographical entries are first-rate: perceptive, judicious, and always eminently browsable, making this encyclopedia the perfect desert-island gift. Its author, Ephraim Katz, brought out the first edition in 1979; he died in 1992 while preparing this updated and expanded version, and the work was completed by a dozen or more researchers.

Katz had a talent for summing up careers in just a few words: Sterling Holloway “played hillbillies, country bumpkins, delivery boys, and soda jerks in some 100 films.” Murray Hamilton was “often cast as an ambitious or conniving figure”; Dennis Hopper “is considered by some the most freaked-out personality in films.” He was especially apt at differentiating among heavies: Vincent Price was “at his best as a treacherous or effete villain,” Dan Duryea was “typecast as a cynical, sneering villain whom women found strangely fascinating,” Claude Rains was “a suave character actor of superbly controlled sardonic manner [who] was charming even when playing villains,” and Donald Pleasence is “at his most convincing as an evil villain with a fixed gaze in his unblinking blue eyes.”

Katz also had a gratifying fondness for odd bits of trivia. We learn that Christopher Lee's autobiography is entitled *Tall, Dark and Gruesome*, and that Bette Midler is the author of *A View from a Broad*. Charles Bronson was “born Charles Bunchinsky, later Buchinski, then Buchinsky.” Of Nicolas Cage we are told, “Intense in his approach to roles, he is



For true movie buffs, when we see Malcolm McDowell looking maniacal in *Star Trek: Generations*, we next want to know his biographical and filmographical history. Have fun reading *The Film Encyclopedia*.

Peter Cushing, his *Hammer Horror* cobwebs brushed away, shows up in *Star Wars* sporting an Empire officer's uniform. When Malcolm McDowell comes bursting onscreen in *Star Trek: Generations*, looking grizzled and maniacal, he doesn't whisper, “My God, how he's aged!” and think fond thoughts of *If...*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *O Lucky Man!*, *Time After Time*, *Cat People*, and *Blue Thunder*. They think, at most, “Hm, he looks familiar.”

But for true movie buffs, knowing an actor's history is half the fun, just as any self-respecting baseball fan makes sure he knows the players' batting averages, personal quirks, and the teams they played for in the past.

If you are, as I am, a dedicated reference freak, there are several all-but-indispensable books that should be sitting on your shelf within easy reach of the TV and VCR. There's the annual *Screen World* series and Leonard Maltin's comprehensive one-volume *Movie and Video Guide*, which I'll save for another column, and for our

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IN THE MOVIE BUSINESS, predicting is folly. My favorite example of this occurred a decade ago, when I was employed at the offices of a magazine that will remain nameless. On this occasion, our offices were visited by a film publicity rep. He had brought a videotape with previews of several summer films, and we settled down in the office's conference room to watch.

On the tape was the trailer for *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial*, the most anticipated film of the year. Just as that trailer began, my boss—the magazine's owner and publisher—stuck his head into the room.

The trailer unrolled—a short, efficient piece of film that evoked the wonder and adventure of the feature to follow. When it was over, you could hear a pin drop. Then my boss wagged a finger at the screen. "That movie," he said, "I spot for a loser."

What a charming guy. Keep that story in mind as you peruse the following list, which is my prediction for how this summer's movies will fare at the box office; I guarantee you that it's wrong. I only offer it here so that, come fall, we can all laugh at how dumb I am. On the other hand, if my predictions all come true, I expect to be appointed head of a major studio.

The following films will all exceed \$100 million gross ticket sales.

1. *Apollo 13*: With Tom Hanks topping a cast of powerhouse actors, effects by Digital Domain, and the suspenseful true story of an American space mission that came near to a tragic outcome, this one will appeal to a wide range of moviegoers. The opening weekend may not be very strong, but if this movie has "the right stuff," it will go the distance.

2. *Casper*: Hardly anybody liked *The Flintstones*, but endless promotion and the fact that subteens didn't have any other summer movies suitable for birthday party outings made it a big success. *Casper* will have the effects, kid appeal, and brand-name recognition of *The Flintstones*, and a script by actresses Deanna Oliver and Sherry Stoner—the same Stoner who is a voice actor, writer and producer on TV's *Tiny Toon Adventures* and *Animaniacs*.

3. *Batman Forever*: The younger casting of the latest in the series seems likely to benefit the series—and it seems very unlikely that the presence of Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey—each perfectly cast for their roles—will hurt the box office.

4. *Species*: I'm especially looking forward to this one: the writer-director of *Real Men*, a weird little comic fantasy that's one of my favorite recent films, tackles a serious monster movie, with mutations designed by H.R. Giger. It's a long-shot that it will rank this high on the list...we'll see.



Editor Flixman predicts Tom Hanks' *Apollo 13* will be the number one film this summer.

5. *Congo*: Spielberg, Crichton, Winston, Marshall—a lot of the same names as were on *Jurassic Park*. And of course everybody loves apes, though not quite so much as they love dinosaurs.

6. *Pocahontas*: A Disney-animated feature—so it's a sure hit. Mel Gibson lends voice to Captain John Smith. I wonder, however, whether the source material can lend itself to a hit of the same proportions as *The Lion King* or *Beauty and the Beast*.

7. *Judge Dredd*: So far, all the controversy about this film has centered on the question, "Will Stallone keep his face inside that helmet for the whole movie?" Dredd fans insist that he must, and I'm told that producer Charlie Lippincott has been intent on maintaining the comic's purity. But, full helmet or not, the film's fate rests much more on the script and direction. The script, drafted at different stages by Walon Green (*The Wild Bunch* and *The Brink's Job*) and Steve De Souza (*Die Hard*), should deliver. Director Danny Cannon, however, remains an unknown quantity.

8. *Mortal Kombat*: Director Paul Anderson's independent film *Shopping* was an ultra-violent look at youth in revolt, off-beat enough to suggest that Anderson may bring a creative spark to this affair. Chris Lambert, the thinking woman's hunk, certainly merits the career boost that this may give him.

9. *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*: How can it fail? However, the opening weekend will provide the bulk of the business, as the big screen inflates the dramatic poverty of the television show.

10. *Waterworld*: Critics, more interested in the budget than the movie, will be waiting for this one with brickbats drawn; and Kevin Costner will need to overcome a perception on the part of sci-fi fans that his films are slow-moving and ponderous. Universal's counter-strategy will be to send the stars out to the talk shows, armed with dynamite action and effects clips—a strategy that may well work, though it will still take a long time for WW to recoup its costs.

—Ed Flixman

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said to have slashed his arm in preparation for his part in *Racing With the Moon*, had two teeth pulled for *Birdy*, and swallowed a live cockroach for *Vampire's Kiss*."

The *Encyclopedia* is particularly thorough on marriages and deaths. Just last night, reading an interview with British director Val Guest in one of my favorite magazines, *Scarlet Street*, my curiosity was piqued by Guest's reminiscence of Janet Munro, star of his film *The Day the Earth Caught Fire*. "She had just finished her contract with Disney.... In the Disney movies, they used to make her tie her boobs down, to make it look like she had none. We got those out, to start with! (Laughs) She had a very tragic end."

Astonishingly, at that point, the subject was simply dropped. But my trusty *Film Encyclopedia* came to the rescue: Munro's career, it notes, "was hampered by an alcohol problem.... She died freakishly at 38 as a result of choking while she was drinking tea."

For all its massive size, however, Katz's book isn't always so trustworthy; you'll find no mention, for example, of some of the names cited at the start of this column, including Kenneth Tobey. (Tobey does show up as an "American character actor of dependable types" in a rival reference work, Halliwell's *Filmgoer's and Video Viewer's Companion*, along with other players too minor for Katz.)

But Katz, at least, offers substantial entries on Peter Cushing, Malcolm McDowell, and Christopher Lee, along with such worthies as John Landis, George Romero, and Sam Raimi. None of these appear in David Thomson's *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* (Alfred A. Knopf, \$45 pp., \$25 paperback), which includes just over a thousand entries—and quirky ones at that. Good lookers Madeleine Stowe, Theresa Russell, and Rebecca De Mornay receive a full column each; Jeff Goldblum isn't even listed. Nor are the Plummers (Katz includes both Christopher and Amanda) or the Carradines (Katz includes all four). Yet good old Johnny Carson, who's never been in a movie, is given more than two pages, simply because Thomson feels like spouting off about him. ("Now, this may sound as if I don't really or entirely like Johnny. Not so. I can never resist a magnificent, triumphant performer whose appearance and aplomb are drawn tight to conceal loneliness, dismay, anger, and disgust.") A long entry on George C. Scott discusses trivia such as *Movie Movie* and *Oklahoma Crude*, yet omits any mention of *Dr. Strangelove*.

Clearly this is a most peculiar reference work. Only in passing does it provide factual information; its real aim is to air David Thomson's opinions.

As opinions go, they're literate, provocative, and often fun to read. Thomson is a passionate and prolific writer of books on Hollywood, and his views are certainly informed. More important, he has what every critic needs most, confidence in his own taste—and in your interest in his taste.

On this last count, his confidence may be

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misplaced. After one has cheered the opinions one happens to agree with (e.g. that "Brian Cox's Lecter in *Manhunter* is arguably more intriguing and more frightening" than Anthony Hopkins's version in *The Silence of the Lambs*) and scowled at those one happens to disagree with (e.g. Thomson's praise for *The Witches of Eastwick*), one may well be left with the uncharitable thought, "Who cares what this guy thinks?"

Laughing Screaming by William Paul (Columbia University Press, 510 pp., Hardcover \$29.50) and **Men, Women, and Chain Saws** by Carol J. Clover (Princeton University Press, 260 pp., \$12.95).

That two university presses—and Ivy League at that—have brought out scholarly studies of the horror film confers a certain legitimacy on the genre; we all want to be taken seriously, even Hollywood's schlock-meisters. But though both authors express a genuine fondness for even the wilder reaches of splatter filmdom (and have clearly spent many hours diligently scribbling notes in front of their VCRs), they seem at pains to distance themselves from such stuff: Professor Clover confesses that until she saw *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* in 1985, she had "assiduously avoided" horror films, though she now declares that "against all odds I have ended up something of a fan." Professor Paul, perhaps with an eye on his departmental colleagues, speaks patronizingly of the genre's "exhilarating trashiness" and, more often than Clover, resorts to film-school academese when he writes of the medium's "idiosyncratic conjoining of narrative and spectacle" and of horror's role as "the dystopic side of the gross-out aesthetic." Such pronouncements can sound almost comical.

Which isn't so far from his subject—the similarities, in allure and effect, between horror and low comedy, two crowd-pleasing genres looked down on by the critics. Even the scariest horror films, he notes, can inspire gales of laughter, and he demonstrates how *The Exorcist*, "with a priest getting hit by flying pea soup," is just one step removed from slapstick. He makes provocative observations about virtually all the movies he examines, from *Night of the Living Dead* ("practically a remake," he says, of the last part of *The Birds*) to *Alien* ("The purity of the monster... personified malignancy, pure and simple... echoes this film's primal aim: to scare the living daylight out of us").

Clover's thesis is in some ways more startling: that the appeal of horror films isn't as conventional wisdom has it, that they allow horny, repressed young males to identify with the monster, thereby serving as an outlet for their aggressions. Rather, she argues, both male and female viewers ultimately identify with the resourceful "Final Girl" who overcomes the menace and survives to tell the tale. Clover manages to persuade us that horror, that most misogynistic of genres, may indeed have a secret feminist message. □

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FLUKE

Continued from page 59

makers in the past, but maybe these two movies will sort of break that barrier for me."

Other horror writers have increased control over their properties by taking a more active role behind the camera, as has King with *Maximum Overdrive* and, more recently, via a close relationship with director Mick Garris; and Clive Barker, who has directed and executive produced numerous projects.

"I've always thought about it," says Herbert. "It's always been something I thought I could do, but we really don't have much of a film industry over here. It's picking up now, but there's still very little opportunity for me to make a movie here—which is why Clive Barker went over to the States."

While Herbert's work remains very popular in the European market, sales of his work in the States have been less robust, in part due to his reluctance to take time from writing for the endless book tours that he reluctantly did during his first years of American publication. He also feels that his inclinations to write for himself rather than for the market's prevailing winds, might also play a factor.

"I had an American agent once who wanted me to write like Stephen King," he laughs. "Now Steve and I are old friends, and I just love his work. But there is no way I want to be like another writer. I want to be like James Herbert and no one else. It sounds very high and mighty but I didn't want to compromise. If it's accepted in America, that's wonderful, but if it isn't, there is nothing I can do about that."

With his latest, *The Ghost of Sleat*, in preparation for an American edition later this year, Herbert is currently immersed in research for his next novel, feeling quite content with the course of his career. And, though he still enjoys the quiet rewards of the writer's life, he feels obliged to point out, that even at the age of fifty-one, with seventeen novels to his credit, they don't get any easier. "Each book is hard unto itself," he says, "and they get harder and harder."

Herbert does harbor one ambition as yet unfulfilled. "I'd love to do a children's story, and do all of the illustrations as well, but I never seem to have the time."

"I do classify myself as a horror writer, though. I have no illusions; but to be a best seller, particularly in England, you have to go outside that genre, because by definition, a genre has a limited audience. You really have to appeal to more than just horror aficionados."

Nevertheless, Herbert feels that the genre is a versatile enough medium to allow him a wide range of expression. "It allows me to dip myself into many waters and many other genres, whether it's humor, romance or thrillers. I can involve all of it in horror so it's actually a vast umbrella under which I can write. It fulfills all my own needs and my own challenges." □

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Continued from page 16

On the hardware front, Philips Electronics NV—the creators of CD-ROM—and Sony Corp. have announced an agreement to design a new compact disc called “CD Plus,” which brings together CD-Audio and CD-ROM technology. The CD Plus is a multi-session music compact disc containing both audio tracks and additional CD-ROM information, letting users listen to songs and read lyrics on the screen at the same time. The implications for CD-ROM-based gaming are varied, but include the creation of game adventures set to popular music and other cross-market ventures. CD Plus technology should make its way into consumer products sometime in 1996. □

Continued from page 47

Dave Galvan, former Hollywood correspondent for the magazine *Wizard*; *The Guide to Comics*, is a free-lance writer living in Tigard, Oregon who specializes in the entertainment industry. Dave is the Hollywood news editor for the syndicated *Flights of Fantasy*, a comic book news magazine. □

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Anime Milestones

By ED FLIXMAN



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Last year, the Sci-Fi Channel's week-long celebration of Japanese animation (*anime*) was a four-star success—you demanded more, and more is on the way.

We can't reveal what titles we're rounding up just yet, but in the meantime, you can test your knowledge of *anime*'s history by matching this list of titles with the appropriate description below.

1. Jungle Taitei (Kimba the White Lion, a.k.a. Leo the Lion)
2. Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind (Warriors of the Wind)
3. Grave of the Fireflies
4. Kiki's Delivery Service
5. Mighty Atom (Astro Boy)
6. Wings of Honneamise
7. My Neighbor Totoro
8. Lensman
9. Barefoot Gen
10. Urotsukidoji (Legend of the Overfiend)
11. Space Adventurer Cobra

a. Osamu Tezuka has been alternately called the God of *manga* (Japanese comics), and the Walt Disney of Japan. Based on his popular *manga*, this series features a cute robot and is one of Japan's first animated TV series.

b. Kimball Kinnison saves an out-of-control spaceship from crashing into a planet. Its dying pilot turns out to be a member of an interstellar team of guardians. Before he dies, he transfers his power to the young Kinnison. This feature film features the first extensive marriage of computer and cel animation.

c. A Japanese family moves to the country, where the two daughters discover various spirits of the forest. This movie is the first animated film to win an award for best movie in Japan.

d. Keiji Nakazawa was six years old when he survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In 1973 he put pen to paper and started work on a weekly *manga* adaptation of his story, an anti-war parable which now extends for thousands of pages. It has been adapted to live-action feature films, an opera, and, of course, this animated film.

e. There have certainly been sexual situations in animation (*Fritz the Cat*) as well as gory violence (*Heavy Metal*), but when this film was released in North America, it made the others seem like *Care Bears*.

f. In this movie, witches must leave home on their thirteenth birthday and discover their speciality. While the main character has trouble even starting her broom, she leaves her small town and tries to make it in the city. This movie was the highest-grossing domes-



A young hero saves an out-of-control space ship in the first feature film to combine computer and cel animation extensively.

tic film in Japan in 1989.

g. Osamu Tezuka said he was inspired by Bambi when he penned this *manga*; when he later adapted it to the small screen, it was Japan's first color *anime* TV series.

h. At a cost of 800 million yen (about 8 million dollars), in 1987 this was the most expensive *anime* feature ever made. Hiroyuki Yamaga was 24 when he made this landmark film, which is set in an alternate universe and is about man's first venture into space.

i. Set in an ecological nightmare of a future, this movie's spunky heroine finds herself trying to stop a war between three kingdoms, while coping with giant, mutated insects and the deadly toxins that pass for air from a ravaged ecosystem. The character was popular enough that she stayed at number one in *Animage* magazine's reader poll for eight years in Japan.

j. This anti-war film is also based on true-life events. In it, a young boy and his sister try to survive when their mother is killed during a bombing raid toward the end of WW II.

k. Footage from this movie—a futuristic story about a cyborg adventurer for hire—was used for Matthew Sweet's music video, *Girlfriend*. □

ANSWERS:

1.b 2.f 3.g 4.e 5.a 6.h 7.c 8.d 9.i 10.j 11.k

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Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

I am writing to see if you have any information concerning any "future" life for the *Back to the Future* series. I know I can speak for practically all BTTF fans worldwide, in that we all would like to see this intelligently entertaining time-travel adventure series continued beyond its present state. All three of these fantastic productions were planned and conceived approximately at the same time, with the intention of never doing anything else with the series beyond that point, other than the now ill-fated *Back to the Future—The Animated Series*.

What Universal Studios & Amblin Entertainment do not seem to realize or understand is that they've created a franchise that has so much more potential than what they had intended. The three films together have grossed approximately \$410 million domestically, which is no small feat! Paramount Studios on the other hand, realize the monetary potential of their franchise (*Star Trek*), and continue to give fans what they want, even if the first six films together have grossed about \$475 million domestically. The only person associated with the BTTF series who seems to be willing to go on a fourth journey whenever the rest of the gang wakes up is Christopher Lloyd. Lloyd has been quoted in another publication as being interested in reprising his role of Doc Brown, if only Universal would approach him.

To Be Continued...

Stephen M. Clark, President,
The Back to the Future Fan Club
Internet: MMCFly@aol.com

The *Back to the Future* trilogy maintained its high quality thanks largely to several years of devoted commitment from Forrest Gump director Robert Zemeckis, who served as writer and director on the entire series. While we would also like to see Doc Brown's adventures continue, it's easy to understand that he would want to tell other stories—and we wouldn't want to see BTTF placed in any other hands. Still, in the words of Elvis Presley, tomorrow is a long time.

Dear Editor,

I read about Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* in the October issue of *Sci-Fi Entertainment* and wondered whatever happened to the filming of Heinlein's novel *Starship Troopers*? I read about a year ago that Paul Verhoeven was directing a big-budget film based on what is probably Heinlein's most famous book. Did this project get shelved?

Jon Petrovski
Mission, Kansas

burnered *Starship Troopers* in favor of the medieval adventure *Crusade*—which was subsequently taken off of TriStar's production slate. No word yet on whether the *Starship Troopers* project will be revived.

Dear Ed.,

I am a recent subscriber (Feb. 1995 is my fourth issue) and I have to tell you that I am really enjoying your magazine. I am particularly enjoying your previews of things to come and your in-depth articles about new shows and movies. But, I noticed that you don't do much in the way of reviews of current stuff... How about it?

On another note, I use Compuserve for E-mail (as you can tell by my address). I'm looking to switch to something better and your comments about Dorsai have me interested. How does one get on Dorsai? If you could send me the E-mail address, I would be an even bigger fan! Anyway, keep up the good work!

David Kahn
New York

Reviews of new films are too often based on snap judgments and an imperfect understanding of filmmakers and their films. We've had too many critics impose their faulty opinions on us regarding the quality of various films to do the same to our readers.

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To the Editor:

Thank you for the article on *Forever Knight* in your February 1995 issue. This intriguing cult show definitely deserves greater media exposure.

However (!)—why was it more important to mention that the character of Schanke is "Nick's partner" rather than the name of John Kapelos, the actor who plays him? The identities of the other actors are given alongside their characters. Why was this courtesy not afforded to Mr. Kapelos? I find this omission to be disturbingly biased (are the actors playing vampires more worthy of note?), unprofessional and grossly unfair to John Kapelos and his fans.

Carolyn G. Lynn
Alexandria, VA

While we regret the omission, aren't you being a little harsh on one of the few publications which has acknowledged this show and its following?

Dear Editor,

Your preview of *Johnny Mnemonic* looked excellent—I've been chomping at the bit to see this picture since I met William Gibson at a con last year and saw his polaroids from the set.

But I've not seen hide nor hair of it in these parts, not even a teaser ad. Did it ever open?

Kenneth Graham
San Francisco, CA

Tristar decided to indulge the Sony Pictures Imaging team's desire to "go a little deeper" into cyberspace with their effects. They seem to be confident of the film, as it's currently scheduled for a release in summer "blockbuster" season.

Dear Mr. Flixman,

Only once before have I felt the need to send a "letter to the editor" but your editorial in the December issue caused that immediate response in me.

Specifically, I am responding to your remarks concerning William Shatner. I have been a *Star Trek* fan since the series originally aired and a fan of Mr. Shatner's as well. I attend several conventions and write a great deal of fan fiction, so I am aware of the "bashing" that has become so prevalent with regard to Mr. Shatner.

I want to thank you for your defense of him, something he has been too much of a gentleman to do himself.

I would also like to thank you profusely for "The Once and Future Kirk," which was wonderful as well. A *New Generation* cast-member made the comment at a recent con that "now that Kirk is dead, the franchise can go on." I have news for those that think so: Kirk will never die as long as people love *Star Trek*. It just won't happen.

Lynn Syck
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

*Corrections: in our October, '94 issue, a passing reference was made to Rick Berman as co-creator of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. While Mr. Berman served as Executive Producer of that series, the show was in fact the sole creation of Gene Roddenberry.*

*In our February issue's coverage of the *Star Trek Voyager* two-hour premiere, we incorrectly spelled the name of the director, Rick Kolbe.*

To contact us through E-mail, the address is flixman@dorsai.dorsai.org—include your name and city if you want your letter published. Mail correspondence to Sci-Fi Entertainment Letters, 457 Carlisle Dr., Herndon, VA 22070.

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